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ABSTRACT

This handbook is one of a series developed in response to requests to provide schools with additional information concerning the written composition portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). The handbook focuses on grades 3 through 5. Following an introduction, the handbook is in two parts. Part 1 contains general information on the writing process and how that process applies to the TAAS writing test. This section includes discussions of prewriting, elaboration, revision, and editing. Part 2 provides scoring criteria and sample student papers with detailed annotations for each type of writing eligible for testing at Grade 5: informative/descriptive, informative/narrative ("how to"), expressive/narrative, informative/classificatory, and persuasive/descriptive. Three appendixes present TAAS writing objectives and instructional targets for grade 5, and explanation of purpose/mode at grade 5, and eligible types of writing at grade 5. (SR)

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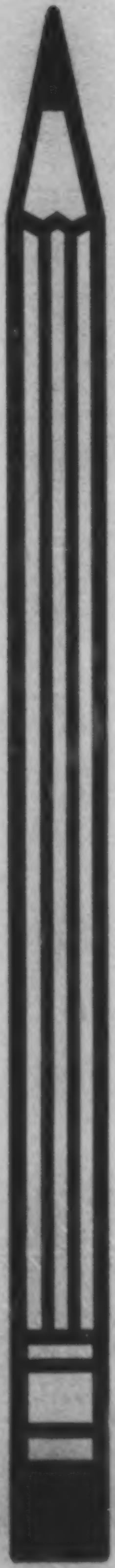

TAAS and the Writing Process: A Composition Handbook

Grades 3 through 5

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TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

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TAAS AND THE WRITING PROCESS:
A COMPOSITION HANDBOOK

GRADES 3 THROUGH 5

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TAAS AND THE WRITING PROCESS: A COMPOSITION HANDBOOK

GRADES 3 THROUGH 5

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INTRODUCTION

Background

During the 1989-1990 school year, the Texas Education Agency received numerous requests to provide schools with additional information concerning the written composition portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). A series of handbooks, entitled *TAAS and the Writing Process: A Composition Handbook*, has been developed in response to these requests. Designed to assist Texas educators in preparing students for the TAAS writing test at Grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 (exit level), these handbooks serve the following purposes:

- to show the connections between classroom writing and the TAAS writing test
- to provide information on the writing process and how this process can be applied by students when writing for TAAS
- to offer detailed information on the scoring of the TAAS written composition
- to provide sample papers, along with detailed annotations, for each type of writing eligible for assessment on the TAAS test

We hope that districts will find these handbooks to be a valuable resource as their teachers work to improve students' performance on the TAAS writing test.

Questions and comments regarding these publications should be addressed to:

Division of Student Assessment
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494
(512) 463-9536

Organization of This Handbook

Part 1 contains general information on the writing process and how that process applies to the TAAS writing test. This section includes discussions of prewriting, elaboration, revision, and editing. Part 2 shows the scoring criteria and sample papers with detailed annotations for each type of writing eligible for testing at Grade 5--informative/descriptive, informative/narrative ("how to"), expressive/narrative, informative/classificatory, and persuasive/descriptive.

From TEAMS to TAAS: The Writing Test

The written composition portion of the Grade 5 TAAS writing test is very similar to the written composition portion of the Grade 5 Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) test. The same types of writing are eligible for assessment, and the same scoring system is used to evaluate the compositions. The multiple-choice component of the writing test, however, has changed significantly, both in philosophy and in format. Whereas the TEAMS test evaluated students' language skills in isolation, the TAAS test assesses these skills in a meaningful context. That is, the multiple-choice items for each objective are based on a series of written passages and require the student to read the passages carefully in order to answer the items correctly. Assessing language skills in this format requires students to use the same kinds of skills that they use when editing or proofreading their own writing--skills such as locating and identifying errors in a piece of writing. The multiple-choice component of the TAAS writing test is thus more closely linked to the process of writing than was its predecessor.

Helping Students to Write: The Writing Process

Many effective teachers of writing focus on the writing process itself as well as on the end product of writing, teaching students how to go about a writing task from start to finish. Through modeling and frequent practice, students learn to generate ideas through prewriting, to develop those ideas into drafts, to rethink and clarify a piece of writing through revision, and to clean up surface errors through editing and proofreading. In these classrooms emphasis is placed on the content of the student's message. That is, the student's writing is viewed as an attempt to communicate ideas to the reader, who responds in some way to the message the student is trying to convey. Students have frequent opportunities to:

- write on topics that are meaningful to them
- write for a variety of purposes and in a variety of formats
- experiment with different ways of expressing ideas
- share their writing with others
- give and receive feedback

This emphasis on writing to communicate encourages students to take compositional risks--that is, to use language creatively without being hampered by concerns about mechanical correctness. The freedom to take chances allows students to explore different ways to express ideas and to develop confidence in their writing ability.

The Writing Process and TAAS

The student who is accustomed to writing and has written for many different purposes will more likely have acquired skills that can be applied to any writing task. Therefore, the best preparation for both the written composition and the multiple-choice portions of the TAAS test is to provide students with frequent opportunities to apply the writing process in the classroom. The student who is experienced in the process of writing will likely internalize this process and should then be able to apply it when writing the TAAS composition or when performing the editing/proofreading tasks required on the multiple-choice portion of the writing test. He or she will be able to generate ideas, to develop those ideas into a draft, to revise a draft, and to edit and proofread for surface errors, using skills and strategies acquired through classroom writing. It is particularly important that each student be familiar enough with the writing process to use it independently since the teacher cannot provide any assistance to the student during either portion of the writing test.

Focused Holistic Scoring

A process called focused holistic scoring is used to evaluate the TAAS written composition. This scoring procedure is "holistic" because the piece of writing is considered as a whole. It is "focused" in that the piece of writing is evaluated according to preestablished criteria. These criteria correspond to the first four objectives listed in the *TAAS English Language Arts Writing Objectives and Measurement Specifications*. They are:

Objective 1: The student will respond appropriately in a written composition to the purpose/audience specified in a given topic.

Objective 2: The student will organize ideas in a written composition on a given topic.

Objective 3: The student will demonstrate control of the English language in a written composition on a given topic.

Objective 4: The student will generate a written composition that develops/supports/elaborates the central idea stated in a given topic.

Each TAAS response is evaluated according to the extent to which it reflects mastery of these four objectives. The response is scored on a scale of 1 (low) to 4 (high). A student may also receive a rating of 0, indicating that the response could not be scored.

In order to master the TAAS writing test, a student must receive a rating of at least 2 on the composition, which indicates that the response is minimally successful, as well as answer correctly the required number of multiple-choice items. In order to receive the Academic Recognition designation on the TAAS writing test, the student must receive a rating of 4 on the composition in addition to mastering all of the multiple-choice writing objectives.

Criteria Assessed on the TAAS Written Composition

Purpose/Audience

Individuals write for specific purposes and audiences. The way an individual writes depends on his or her purpose for writing and the audience addressed. The TAAS written composition assesses the student's ability to write for a specified purpose and audience. Three purposes--informative, expressive, and persuasive--are eligible for testing at Grade 5. Additional information on these purposes can be found in the *TAAS English Language Arts Writing Objectives and Measurement Specifications* and in the appendix of this document.

Organization

In order to communicate successfully, a writer must organize his or her ideas in a clear and logical manner. The TAAS written composition assesses the student's ability to use a specified mode, or method, of organization and to proceed logically within that mode. At Grade 5, three modes of organization--descriptive, narrative, and classificatory--may be assessed. Additional information on these modes can be found in the *TAAS English Language Arts Writing Objectives and Measurement Specifications* and in the appendix of this document.

Language Control

In order to communicate effectively, the writer must show sufficient control of language so that the reader has no difficulty understanding what the writer is attempting to say. The TAAS written composition assesses the student's ability to use language in a clear and precise manner. Since TAAS responses represent first-draft writing, however, some errors in language mechanics, sentence structure, and usage are to be expected. The student is not penalized for these kinds of errors unless they are severe enough to impair meaning.

Elaboration

The successful writer is able to develop his or her ideas in such a way that the reader understands what the writer is attempting to communicate. The TAAS writing test assesses the student's ability to develop ideas clearly, logically, and thoroughly. For a more detailed explanation of elaboration, see pages 21-34.

Additional Information on the TAAS Writing Test

The *TAAS English Language Arts Writing Objectives and Measurement Specifications* provide detailed information about both the multiple-choice portion of the TAAS writing test and the written composition. With respect to the multiple-choice items, the measurement specifications describe the objectives (core concepts) and instructional targets (specific skills reflecting the essential elements) eligible for assessment, as well as the types of items that may appear on the test. In addition, the specifications provide sample items for each instructional target and an appendix listing the usage, capitalization, and punctuation rules eligible for testing.

With regard to the written composition, the measurement specifications describe the purposes and modes eligible for testing; the types of writing prompts, or topics, used; and the characteristics of successful responses. In addition, the specifications present a representative sample prompt for each eligible type of writing.

Part 1
TAAS and the Writing Process

GENERATING AND ORGANIZING IDEAS:
THE PREWRITING STAGE

What is Prewriting?

Prewriting is the process that an effective writer follows to assemble ideas and develop communication strategies before he or she begins to write. It moves the writer from the thinking stage to the writing stage and includes any activity that helps to generate, focus, and/or organize creative thought. Prewriting involves defining the task and devising ways to accomplish that task. This planning stage is especially important because it helps to determine the writer's work in subsequent stages of the writing process.

Helping Students to Prewrite

Beginning writers are often unaware of the many stages that a piece of writing may go through before completion because they have only seen final finished products. Consequently, they may be prone to begin a writing assignment by preparing a "final" draft rather than by engaging in any preliminary activities. When their one-draft compositions are less than successful, they may become frustrated and convinced that they cannot write. It is helpful for beginning writers to understand that writing involves more than a perfect recording of words, and that many successful writers do follow a step-by-step writing process. The first of these steps is prewriting, and there are a number of prewriting activities that may be particularly useful to young writers.

Prewriting Strategies

Prewriting is often regarded only as a technique for generating and focusing ideas; however, it is also useful for organizing the writer's ideas. It may include activities such as brainstorming, focused freewriting, webbing, charting, listing, drawing, and story mapping. The writer may use any of these, singly or in combination, to develop a full and detailed body of ideas that provides a solid base for a first draft.

Brainstorming

When students are first learning to use prewriting strategies, they often benefit from preliminary discussions, or oral brainstorming sessions, that relate writing topics to their own experiences. To begin the brainstorming session, the teacher gives the students a word, a phrase, a question, or a situation intended to stimulate thinking. For example, if the planned writing activity is a personal narrative, the prompt might be "Favorites," "Favorite Books," or "Favorite Food." During this prewriting session there are no "right" or "wrong" responses. Rather, the purpose of the activity is to generate and record ideas that will stimulate writing, and virtually any response has that potential. After gaining experience in several large group sessions, students should be able to begin working through their prewriting in small groups. When students become familiar with oral brainstorming, it will be time for them to progress to individual written brainstorming. This is an important transition for students to make, since no group, oral, or teacher-directed prewriting is possible during the TAAS test.

In the following example the student has used brainstorming to generate ideas for his or her persuasive letter, based on the prompt on page 200 of this handbook.

President
Govenor
Nolen Ryne
Bill Cosby
Shanade
Sting
Michal Jordan
NEW KIDS
Somebody from football
a ice Skater
MC HAMMER

Focused Freewriting

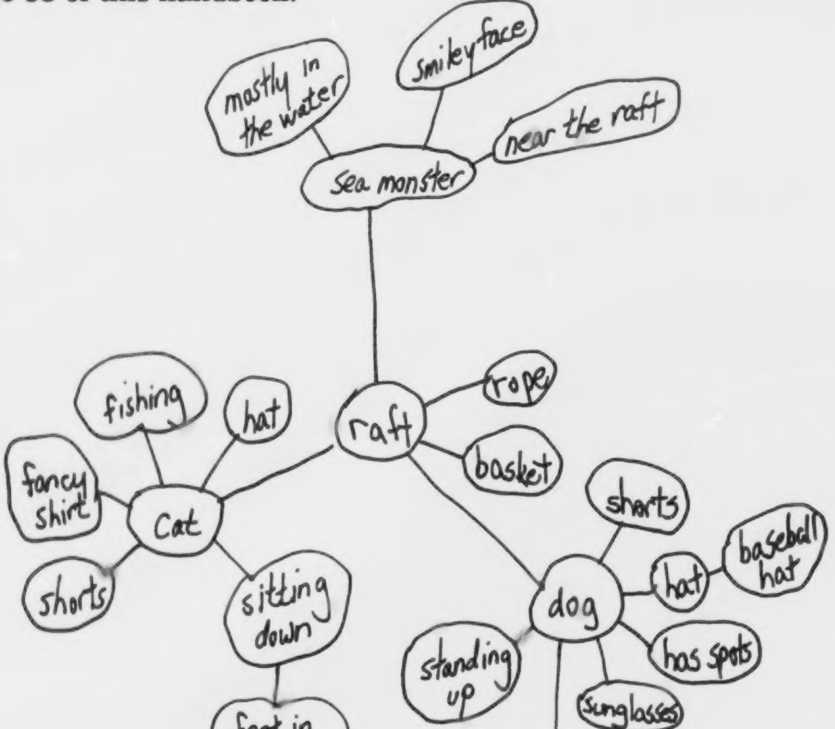
Focused freewriting is similar to brainstorming in that the goal is simply to generate and record as many ideas, feelings, memories, and even seemingly unrelated words and phrases as possible. Students are directed to write steadily for a certain period of time (five or ten minutes, for example) in response to a particular stimulus. The only rule is that the students must not stop writing. If they run out of ideas, they can write over and over "I'm stuck" or "I don't know what to write" until another thought comes to mind. In this exercise there should be no editing: no erasures, no crossouts, no reflecting, no correcting. The purpose of focused freewriting is to find and capture images, thoughts, feelings, or words and to get them on paper. This activity is a good way to combat the nonproductive time students spend worrying about getting started or about what to write. Focused freewriting helps them to learn to separate the producing process from the editing process.

The key factor in both brainstorming and focused freewriting is the absence of editing. During this period nothing is a "good" idea, nor is anything a "bad" idea. Later, during the drafting stage, the "best" ideas will be used, but at the time of generation no writer knows exactly what the final draft will include or which idea is "best." In the following example, the student has used focused freewriting to work his or her way through the preparation of a response for the prompt on page 164.

ok what about TV. Its great. I love TV my favorite show is Wonder Years ok fine but what's good about TV well it has good shows. its something to do if theres no one to play with. or if its raining. or cold. or your sick. and then you learn stuff to like Mr. Wizard or Discover or about bears and seals and stuff. And it has cartoons on Saturday like Muppet Babies. And thats all. And I can't think of any bad stuff. TV is great. Only parents and teachers dont like it. My mom says theres too much killing and stuff I don't get to watch Miami vice and things like that. And my teacher says people don't do homework. ok I'll put that I'm done.

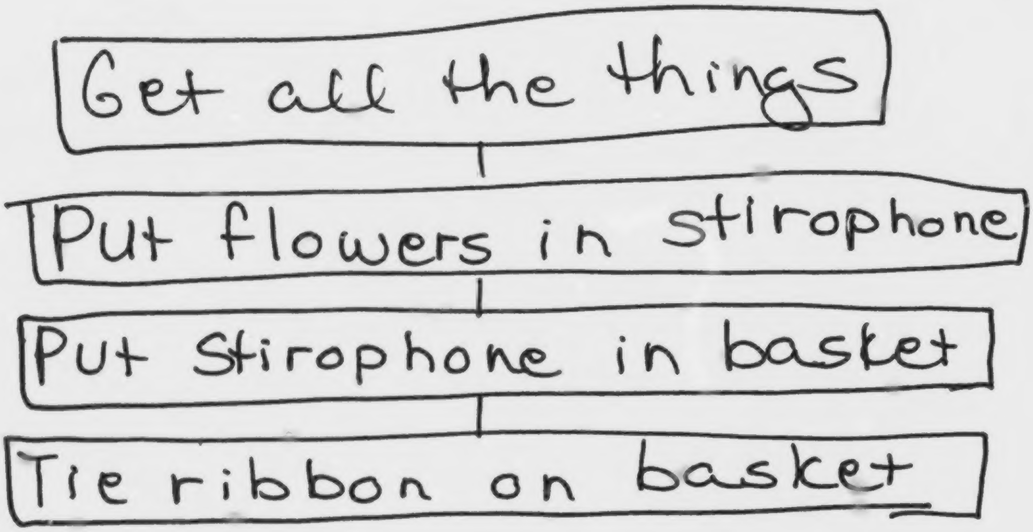
Webbing

Some students demonstrate difficulty in narrowing a topic or focusing on a manageable portion of a larger subject. Prewriting activities can help. One prewriting activity that may help students focus on a particular topic or on a portion of a piece of writing is webbing. In the webbing process students begin by writing a word or phrase in a circle drawn in the center of the paper. As with brainstorming and focused freewriting, students begin to write down all of the responses evoked by the topic in that first circle. Each word or phrase is placed in its own circle, which is connected to a preceding circle. Because each of the words or ideas is connected to another and therefore linked to the original word, the resulting collection of ideas is somewhat more interrelated than brainstorming or focused freewriting. This technique is effective in preparing a descriptive response based on a picture prompt or in expanding ideas in a narrative or informative piece. In a descriptive piece, for example, webbing can help direct the student's attention to the details of a picture or an object to be described. The webbing, or connecting lines, helps the student organize his or her thoughts by depicting objects or ideas in relation to one another and to the whole. By using the web as a guide, the student will be more likely to describe one area completely before moving to another, thereby demonstrating an organizational strategy. In addition, webbing promotes the elaboration required for successful responses by providing a graphic display of related details that can be incorporated in an elaborated description. The writer developed the following web for the description of the picture prompt shown on page 58 of this handbook.


mostly in the water
smiley face
near the raft
Sea monster
fishing
hat
raft
rope
fancy shirt
Cat
basket
shorts
shorts
sitting down
feet in water
hat
baseball hat
dog
standing up
has spots
sunglasses
pushing raft with a pole

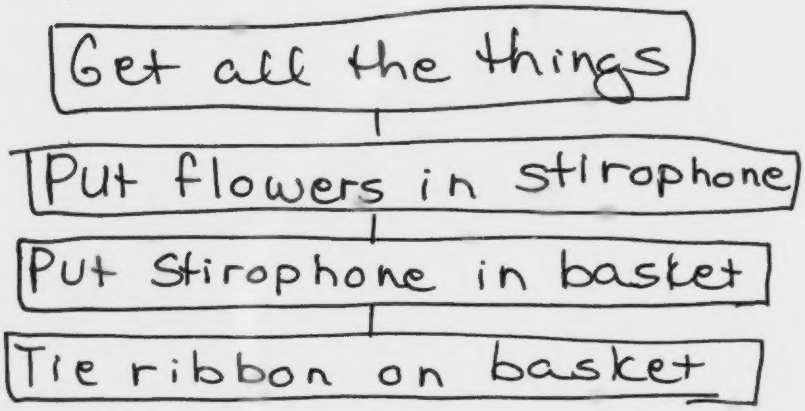
Charting

Informative/narrative writing requires students to tell how to do something. Consequently, a detailed sequence of steps is necessary for success. A flowchart is useful in any writing that requires sequencing. In the flowchart below, based on the prompt on page 94, the writer has connected each entry to the next entry, and the ideas or events progress in a linear manner.


Get all the things
Put flowers in stirophone
Put Stirophone in basket
Tie ribbon on basket

Listing

Although a flowchart is helpful in organizing thoughts for a first draft, many students have a tendency to list only the major steps in their writing and to leave out the elaborated detail necessary for a successful response. It may be helpful for these students to use another type of prewriting in conjunction with the flowchart in order to elicit important details. This writer has used some of the flowchart entries as headings for lists.


Get all the things
Put flowers in stirophone
Put Stirophone in basket
Tie ribbon on basket

Get things

basket
flowers
ribbon
Stirophone

Do flowers

put tall ones in middle
put short ones around
do a few at a time
Make it nice

Do ribbon

Tie on basket
Make fluffy bow

Listing also assists in generating and organizing the writer's thoughts for classificatory writing. In the example below, the writer first listed the good and bad things about watching television and then numbered the points in the order in which he or she planned to present them.

TV

Good

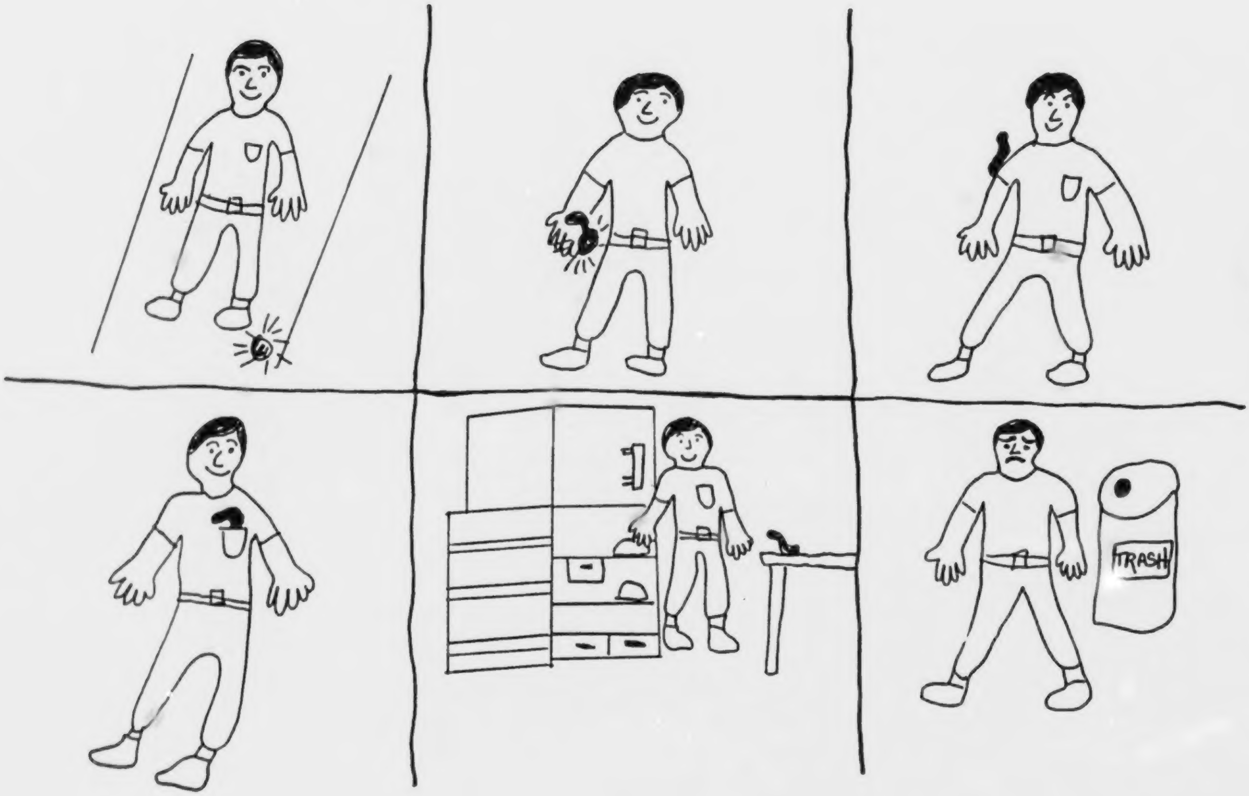
3 Keeps me company—sick alone
6 entertainment
1 learn things
2 see things I can't ~~see~~ go to like football
3 ~~good for when your sick~~
4 nature shows
5 good shows on PBS

Bad

4 watch to much
3 costs alot to fix
6 nasty movies
5 bad language
2 To much violance
1 To much comercals

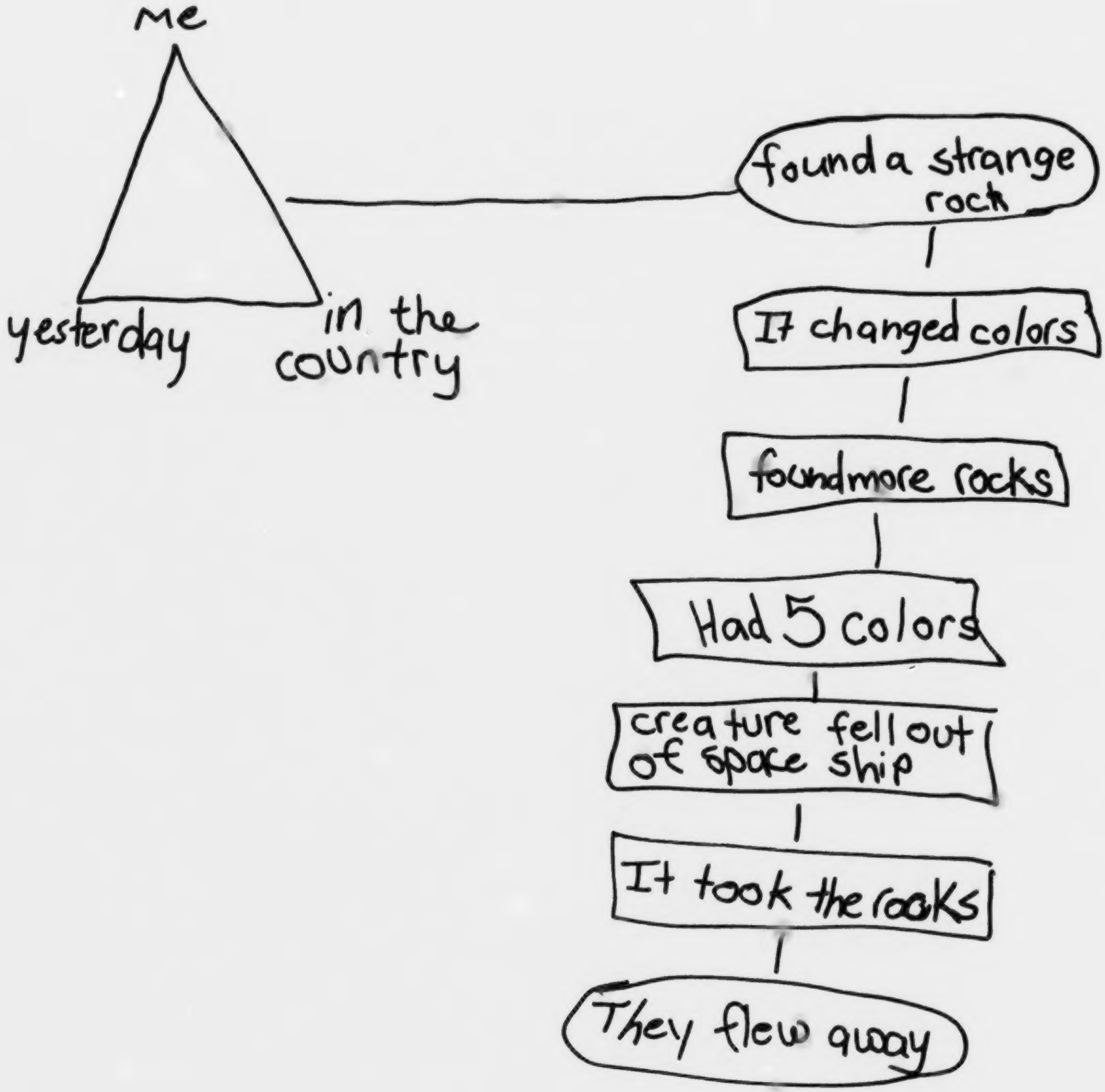
Drawing

Many students enjoy drawing, and this preference can easily be channeled into a narrative prewriting activity. The student can develop a story line in a comic-strip-like motif and then translate the story into words, using the prewriting pictures as an organizational guide. The following drawing was a prewriting activity for a narrative composition based on the prompt on page 130 of this handbook.

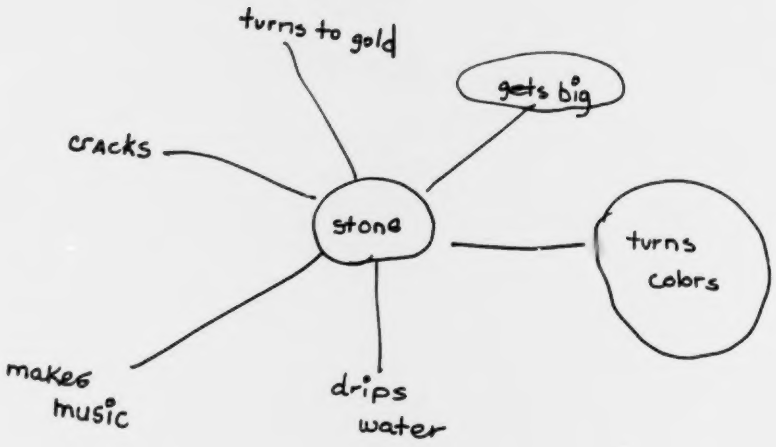


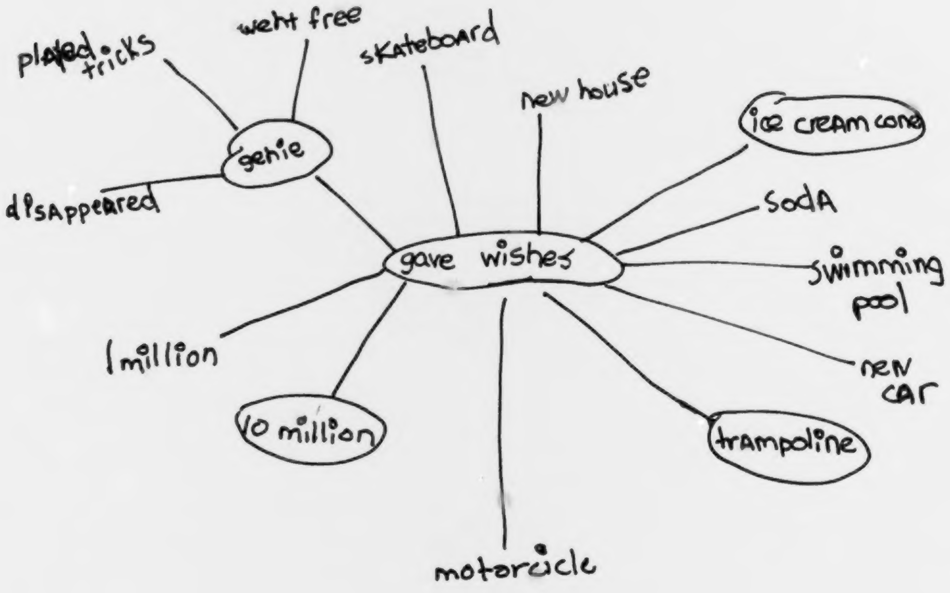
Story Mapping

Story mapping is another useful organizational activity for narrative writing. In the example below, the points of the triangle represent the characters and setting--that is, who, when, and where. The first circle specifies the conflict, and the last circle contains the resolution. Blocks are added between the circles to represent specific story events.


me
yesterday
in the country
found a strange rock
It changed colors
foundmore rocks
Had 5 colors
creature fell out of space ship
It took the rocks
They flew away

Some students may want to combine story mapping with another prewriting activity to help generate specific details for their stories or descriptions. In the activity below, the writer uses events from his or her story map as the focal point for generating additional ideas through webbing. The writer then circles the ideas that he or she has chosen to use in the story.


turns to gold
gets big
cracks
stone
turns colors
makes music
drips water


played tricks
went free
skateboard
new house
ice cream cone
genie
disappeared
soda
gave wishes
swimming pool
1 million
new car
10 million
trampoline
motorcicle

Prewriting for TAAS

Although the TAAS compositions are scored as first drafts, the content is expected to be developed, organized, and written for the correct purpose; prewriting is a useful tool for accomplishing these tasks. Students are provided with two blank pages in the test booklet on which to generate, focus, and organize their thoughts in preparation for responding to the writing prompt. They may choose to use a prewriting activity or any combination of activities, or they may write out their ideas in a draft form on those pages. Students should be encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.

If prewriting is part of the routine classroom writing experience, students will always have a strategy to use when faced with a new writing challenge. Although the name "prewriting" suggests that it is a preliminary activity conducted only before writing begins, it is, in reality, recursive, as is the entire writing process. That is, it is quite possible that a writer would use a prewriting technique to help resolve a problem that has been revealed during the revision process. For example, if an idea needs additional elaboration, the student might use that idea as the stimulus and brainstorm to generate related details. On the other hand, if an idea lacks focus, it might be used as the center for a webbing activity so that the student can develop the relationship between that idea and others to be included in the piece. Consequently, students should be encouraged to regard the various types of prewriting techniques as tools that can be used throughout the construction of their pieces of writing.

There is no one prewriting activity that always works for every type of writing, nor is there one activity that works for every individual engaged in a particular kind of writing. However, in writing for TAAS, students experienced in the prewriting process will be able to make full use of their own prewriting strategies; and their compositions will more likely reflect the degree of specificity, elaboration, and organization required for success.

ELABORATING IDEAS: THE DRAFTING STAGE

What is Elaboration?

Elaboration is the degree to which the writer develops ideas clearly, logically, and completely in order to allow the reader to understand thoroughly what the writer is attempting to say in a piece of writing. No matter what the writer's purpose, this understanding is dependent not so much on the number of ideas the writer generates as on the quality of the development of each idea. Some writers--especially inexperienced ones--may believe that the more ideas they include or the more they write, the more effective their piece of writing will likely be. In reality, the merit of any piece of writing cannot be determined simply by the number of ideas or words it contains. For example, two ideas that are well developed produce better elaboration than six ideas that are minimally developed, just as one page of relevant, specific support is always more effective than two pages of vague or general support. It is the writer's ability to develop each idea precisely and thoroughly that determines how strong and complete the elaboration in a piece of writing will likely be.

Helping Students to Elaborate in Their Writing

While the components of form--correct language mechanics and sound organization--help to make a student's writing clear and coherent, an overemphasis on their importance may create misconceptions about what effective writing is. One widely held misconception, for example, is that mechanical correctness is the single most important criterion for effective writing. The all-too-common belief that errorless writing is "good" writing has prevented some students from recognizing the relationship between thinking and writing. Although these students possess the language mechanics to write well, they have not acquired the thinking "tools" necessary to improve the quality of the elaboration in their writing. Another misconception is that knowing certain "formulas" will always help one to write effectively. Two of the most common writing "formulas" involve beginning and ending the composition in a particular way (using, in many cases, a teacher-generated sentence), and writing the composition in a certain number of paragraphs (often specified by the teacher beforehand) without regard for the simplicity or complexity of the writing assignment or topic. The excessive use of writing "formulas" may promote the idea that effective writing can be more easily accomplished--and meaning more easily created--if the writer follows certain predetermined steps. The reality, however, is that effective writing requires careful thought. It is dependent on the writer's understanding of his or her purpose, as well as on his or her ability to organize ideas logically, to maintain consistent control of written language, and to generate and develop ideas in a way that will make the text richer and more accessible, allowing the reader to appreciate and understand completely what the writer is attempting to say.

In every piece of writing, no matter what its purpose, the writer must generate, organize, and develop ideas. Although all of these activities require the writer to create meaning, it is through the writer's development, or elaboration, of ideas that this meaning is communicated. In order to develop ideas in their own writing, students must first understand what effective elaboration is. Only after students have this basic knowledge can they take the next step: applying these principles to their own writing so that each generated idea is relevant, specific, and thoroughly developed.

Developing in Students a Critical Frame of Mind

One of the primary purposes of the prewriting stage of the writing process is to generate and record as many ideas as possible, without consideration for whether they will ultimately be "usable." At that stage, the writer must not be concerned with the quality of the ideas--that is, how relevant/irrelevant or effective/ineffective they are. However, once the writer is ready to choose those ideas he or she wishes to include in the first draft, adopting a critical frame of mind becomes necessary, for it enables the writer to make sound judgments about both the quality of the ideas and the most effective means of developing them.

The writer who adopts a critical frame of mind will be able to

(1) focus on what is "good" about the development of each idea so that he or she can shape each one into something that creates meaning

(2) discard any idea that is irrelevant, general, or vague and replace it with one that is relevant and specific.

Applying these critical judgments to each generated idea helps the writer to distinguish those sentences that contribute to the response from those sentences that do not. Once the writer determines which ideas to develop, he or she can "target" those ideas and begin to add the detail necessary to improve their effectiveness and to strengthen the response as a whole.

Below are three excerpts from Grade 5 TAAS responses. Following each excerpt is a short explanation of how the writer may improve the quality of the elaboration.

The first excerpt is based on the persuasive prompt on page 200 of this handbook. This excerpt was taken from the response (P-5) on page 207.

EXCERPT 1A (PERSUASIVE):

> I would like to invite George Bush, because I have never seen him in real life before. George Bush is very famous to some people, but some of the people don't like him. I like presidents because if we didn't [have] presidents on earth there will be no peace on earth.

The writer needs to consider the effectiveness of the last two sentences. These sentences do not contribute to the author's purpose, which is to convince the reader that George Bush would be the "best" famous person to visit the school. Neither sentence, therefore, qualifies as elaboration. Although the first of these sentences is about George Bush--"George Bush is very famous to some people, but some of the people don't like him"--it presents no ideas that support the writer's stated position; in fact, its negative focus in the second part of the sentence implies that President Bush would *not* be a good choice. The last sentence is equally ineffective because the writer does nothing but state generally why he or she likes presidents; therefore, it lacks both specificity and persuasiveness.

To achieve more effective elaboration in this part of the response, the writer needs to focus his or her efforts on improving the quality of ideas in these two sentences. The student may accomplish this by strengthening the persuasiveness of the idea introduced in the second sentence--"George Bush is very famous"--and by replacing the last sentence with a specific reason that provides convincing support for the writer's choice. Following is an example of one such revision. (The underlined sections represent changes or additions.)

EXCERPT 1B (PERSUASIVE):

> I would like to invite George Bush, because I have never seen him in real life before. George Bush is very famous to *most* people. *All the teachers and students and maybe even the parents could shake his hand and get his autograph. Then we could ask him questions. Like how does he like being the president and what it's like to be famous. He could also tell us how he works with other countries and how we can have* peace on earth.

The second excerpt is based on the descriptive prompt on page 58 of this handbook. This excerpt was taken from the student response (D-3) on page 63.

EXCERPT 2A (DESCRIPTIVE):

> Boy did they [the cat and the dog] look funny. The dog looked weired with his red and white clothes on. Dogs don't usally have clothes on. His clothes were funny looking. And he had a big nose two big ears and four short legs but he was standing on his back legs. And he had a tail.

The writer needs to eliminate the general, extraneous, and obvious information in order to improve the overall quality of the elaboration. While the sparse use of color words like "red and white" neither detracts from nor enhances the effectiveness of a descriptive response, the sole use or overuse of color words contributes little to the writer's descriptive purpose because color words allow the reader to obtain only a vague impression of the scene. General words like "weired," "funny looking," and "big" are ineffective and must be replaced with specific words that help to paint a clearer picture of the scene in the reader's mind. The writer must also eliminate those sentences that weaken the response. For example, the sentence "Dogs don't usally have clothes on" is weak because it is extraneous and therefore nondescriptive; and, since all dogs have tails, the sentence "And he had a tail" is considered merely obvious information that does not contribute to the effectiveness of the elaboration. Discarding these two sentences and adding, in their place, sentences containing specific descriptive detail would strengthen the development of ideas in the description. Following is an example of how a student might revise the excerpt above to accomplish this. (The underlined sections represent changes or additions.)

EXCERPT 2B (DESCRIPTIVE):

> Boy did they look funny. The dog looked sort of like a boy at the beach. He was wearing red and white swim trunks with a stripe on the side and he had a baseball cap on. He had a long nose that was black at the tip and it had some little speckles on the side. His ears were floppy, and he was standing on his short back legs. His spotted tail was sticking straight out the back of his swim trunks.

The third excerpt is based on the narrative prompt on page 130 of this handbook. This excerpt was taken from the student response (N-3) on page 135.

EXCERPT 3A (NARRATIVE):

> It started to change another color. I was thinking that I was trying to tell somebody to tell me if the stone was weerd because it was changing color. I was trying to take it out of my hand but it was stuck. I tell my mom if she can take it out. And it changed color. And I was thinking that was weerd and it was stuck and that was weerd.

The writer needs to strengthen the logical progression of the story--that is, he or she must explain each event in more detail so that the reader is able to understand the significance of that event, as well as its logical connection to the next event in the sequence. At the same time, the writer must eliminate the unnecessary rambling and repetition (the stone "was weerd" and "was stuck") because these are problems that keep the story from moving forward. The repetitive phrases add no new information: they fill up space on the page but have no other discernible purpose. To improve the overall effectiveness of this section of the narrative, the writer should include only those ideas that contribute to a more sustained, controlled, and elaborated sequence of events. Following is an example of how the student might revise to accomplish this task. (The underlined sections represent changes or additions.)

EXCERPT 3B (NARRATIVE):

> It started to change another color. It turned to a bright blue and started glowing. I was amazed. I decided to find out if the stone was weird. I would show it to my mom first. She might know about stones that can change colors. I walked home quickly with the stone still in my hand. "Mom" I said. "Look at this strange looking stone." I tried to take it out of my hand to give to her, but it was stuck. I asked my mom if she could take it out of my hand. When she touched it, it changed to green. Suddenly it dropped out of my hand.

In all three of these excerpts, the writer's ability to refocus and revise has strengthened the clarity, logic, and development of ideas, thereby improving the overall quality of the elaboration in that part of the response.

Elaborating for TAAS

Elaboration is an important component of successful writing on the TAAS test, for the effectiveness of the student's response is, in large measure, determined by the quality of the development of ideas--that is, how clearly and thoroughly the student develops those ideas that are relevant to the specified purpose.

However, many students encounter their greatest difficulties on the TAAS test in the area of elaboration. They may receive an unsuccessful rating of 1 on the composition simply because they failed to support their ideas with enough details. Because the responses contain merely unelaborated ideas or too few elaborated ideas, they lack the information or explanation necessary to be minimally successful. These responses are considered skeletal because there are simply too many places in the text where the student needed to "tell more." In fact, it is often what the student has failed to say rather than what he or she has said that causes the response to receive a 1.

There is no single method through which support or elaboration may be achieved on TAAS; depending upon the purpose for writing, the writer may use a number of different methods to develop ideas effectively. Whatever the writer's purpose, however, including information that does not add either explicitly or implicitly to the reader's understanding of the response is contrary to the whole notion of meaningful elaboration.

The quality of the support and/or elaboration in TAAS responses is assessed in terms of how completely each idea is developed. Teachers can improve students' ability to develop ideas by teaching them what elaboration is and how it is achieved in a written response. Once students can distinguish between effective and ineffective elaboration, they can learn to develop their ideas more clearly, logically, and completely.

Students may also benefit from understanding that there are levels of elaboration that range from minimal to thorough. Knowing these levels may help students learn to evaluate the extent to which they have developed their ideas in any piece of writing.

Below are general definitions of the levels of elaboration as they apply to TAAS responses. Following these definitions are more specific explanations of elaboration in descriptive, "how-to," narrative, classificatory, and persuasive writing.

Extension

An idea is extended when it is minimally elaborated--that is, when the writer links to it one or two additional specific pieces of pertinent information.

A Somewhat Elaborated Idea

If the writer links to the extension of an idea one or two more specific pieces of pertinent information that add to the reader's understanding of the idea, that idea is considered somewhat elaborated.

A Moderately Elaborated Idea

If the writer further clarifies a somewhat elaborated idea by describing or explaining it in even greater detail, the idea becomes moderately elaborated.

When the writer adds specific pieces of pertinent information to each idea, he or she creates more effective elaboration. This effectiveness is the result of the "layering" of pieces of information. "Layering" may be defined as the way in which the pieces of information that are pertinent to each generated idea are connected so as to support the idea logically and specifically. The more each idea is layered, the greater, or deeper, the reader's understanding of the idea--and the response as a whole--will likely be.

Elaboration in Descriptive Writing

The writer's purpose in descriptive writing is to create a vivid image of an object, person, place, situation, or concept in the reader's mind. The degree to which the writer accomplishes this purpose is dependent upon his or her use of precise language and rich detail. In the case of a picture prompt, the writer may elaborate through a combination of specific word choice and the location of objects or features, one in relation to another.

Following are examples of the levels of elaboration in a typical descriptive response, based on the picture prompt on page 58. (The underlined sections represent additional levels of elaboration.)

UNELABORATED IDEA

There is a dog.

In this idea the dog is neither specifically described nor located.

EXTENDED IDEA

There is a dog. He has a pole.

The extension adds a piece of information--that the dog "has a pole"--to the original idea, although the pole is neither specifically described nor precisely located.

SOMEWHAT ELABORATED IDEA

There is a dog. He is holding a long wooden pole in his hands.

In some instances the somewhat elaborated idea will contain more sentences than the extended idea. In the above example, however, both are two sentences. The difference between them is a matter of specific language and location--that is, the type of pole is identified ("long wooden"), and the pole is precisely located in relation to the dog (He is holding it in his hands).

MODERATELY ELABORATED IDEA

> There is a dog. He is holding a long wooden pole in his hands. The pole is halfway in the water. The dog is pushing the raft with it.

The third sentence provides the reader with even more specific information about the location of the pole (it's "halfway in the water"), and the last sentence focuses on the pole's purpose (it's for "pushing the raft"). The addition of these details creates more effective elaboration in this section of the response.

Elaboration in "How-To" Writing

The writer's purpose in a "how-to" response is to explain a sequence or set of steps or stages in a process or activity so that this process or activity as a whole can be clearly understood by the reader. In writing this type of response, the writer may elaborate through a thorough, unambiguous, specific description of each step or stage. This type of description facilitates the reader's complete understanding so that he or she can easily visualize or even replicate the process or activity simply by using the response as a guide.

The "how-to" prompt in this handbook (see page 94) requires the writer to explain to a friend in his or her class how to make something special for the teacher. The following examples of the levels of elaboration have been taken from a typical response, in which the writer has chosen to explain how to make a bookmark for the teacher. (The underlined sections represent additional levels of elaboration.)

SERIES OF UNELABORATED IDEAS

> First you get a piece of paper. Next you cut out a recktanglar shap. Then you decorate it. Now you are ready to give your bookmark to your teacher.

Because the steps above are unelaborated, they lack the specific detail necessary to give the reader a clear sense of how to make a bookmark.

Note: All of the following examples of elaboration focus on the third sentence ("Then you decorate it").

EXTENDED IDEA

> Then you decorate the front of it with some markers.

The extension adds information that specifically explains where the student will decorate the bookmark (on "the front of it") and what he or she will use to decorate it ("some markers").

SOMEWHAT ELABORATED IDEA

> Then you decorate the front of it with some markers. You could draw diffrent color flowers. You could put little extra things like glitter.

The writer adds two more specific details about the decoration of the bookmark, identifying the particular decoration the student might draw on the front of the bookmark ("diffrent color flowers"), then explaining how the student might decorate these flowers (put glitter on them). These details improve the quality of the elaboration by making it easier for the reader to envision the decoration step in the process.

MODERATELY ELABORATED IDEA

> Then you decorate the front of it with some markers. You could draw diffrent color flowers. You could put little extra things like glitter. And if you punch a hole at the top of the bookmark you could tie a peice of pretty yarn through the hole for another decoration.

In the last sentence the writer focuses on another way the student could decorate his or her bookmark. By specifically showing how the student could tie a piece of yarn to the top of the bookmark, the writer adds depth and substance to this step in the process. Note that in the original series of unelaborated ideas, there was no detail whatsoever about this step; it simply occupied a particular place in the sequence. Elaborating on this idea, however, allows the writer to give the reader a better sense of how to decorate the bookmark--that is, what will be drawn on its front, what will be used to create this drawing, and what else will be added to decorate the bookmark. This type of thoroughness creates effective elaboration and, combined with elaboration of other steps in the process, leads the reader to a thorough understanding of how to make this "special present."

Elaboration in Narrative Writing

In narrative writing the writer develops a plot in order to tell a story. This plot, or story line, consists of a linked, sustained sequence of events that are meaningfully related and that move through time. The more completely and specifically each of these events is developed, the more each contributes to the effectiveness of the story as a whole. The writer may use such methods as description, characterization, word choice, and dialogue to elaborate in narrative writing. The inclusion of description, for example, may help the reader to visualize the characters and the events of the story; rich details and a varied word choice may embellish the unfolding of events; and dialogue may enhance characterization or make the story line more concrete and interesting. However, in creating an effective, well-developed narrative, the writer is not limited to these four particular methods of elaboration; other methods may work equally well.

Following are examples of the levels of elaboration in a typical narrative response, based on the prompt on page 130. (The underlined sections represent additional levels of elaboration.)

SERIES OF UNELABORATED IDEAS

> I saw a sparkeling pink stone. I picked it up. It changed color. I found out it was valuble. Then I decided to keep the sparkeling pink stone.

The ideas above constitute a linked sequence of events; but because they are unelaborated, the story line is no more than the skeleton of a narrative.

Note: All of the following examples of elaboration focus on sentences three and four only ("It changed color. I found out it was valuble").

EXTENDED IDEA

> I saw a sparkeling pink stone. I picked it up. As it rested in my palm, it changed to a bright orange. I found out it was valuble. Then I decided to keep the sparkeling pink stone.

The addition of the clause "As it rested in my palm," and the substitution of a specific detail ("bright orange") for a general word ("color") creates a clearer image of what happened once the narrator picked up the stone.

SOMEWHAT ELABORATED IDEA

> I saw a sparkeling pink stone. I picked it up. As it rested in my palm, it changed to a bright orange. I took it to my friend Mr. Wizzard. He said it was valuble because it was old. Then I decided to keep the sparkeling pink stone.

This additional elaboration provides a specific explanation of who tells the narrator that the stone is valuable and why it is valuable, making the story more concrete and interesting.

MODERATELY ELABORATED IDEA

> I saw a sparkeling pink stone. I picked it up. As it rested in my palm, it changed to a bright orange. I took it to my friend Mr. Wizzard. He said it was valuble because it was old. "Why is this old stone valuble" I asked? He said "It is anshant. It is from the time of dinasors." Then I decided to keep the sparkeling pink stone.

The addition of dialogue serves two purposes: it contributes to character development, and it allows the writer to show, rather than simply to tell the reader, what happens in the story.

Elaboration in Classificatory Writing

The purpose of classificatory writing is to organize information into groups, or classes. To accomplish this purpose, the writer must be able to identify and present in detail the similar and/or dissimilar characteristics of ideas, objects, people, or places. So that the reader can clearly understand the writer's groupings of these characteristics, the writer must provide for each characteristic an explanation that is as specific and as complete as possible. To achieve the development necessary for this type of explanation, the writer may elaborate by using such methods as description, examples, reasons, illustrations, and/or anecdotes. Although any or all of these methods may serve to develop ideas effectively in a classificatory response, other methods may be equally effective.

Following are examples of the levels of elaboration in a typical classificatory response, based on the prompt on page 164. (The underlined sections represent additional levels of elaboration.)

UNELABORATED IDEA

> One good thing about television is you can learn things.

Because this idea is both general and undeveloped, it contributes very little to the reader's understanding of why television is good.

EXTENDED IDEA

> One good thing about television is you can learn things. It can tell you about other places in the world.

The extension provides a specific example of one "thing" ("other places in the world") that television can teach the writer.

SOMEWHAT ELABORATED IDEA

> One good thing about television is you can learn things. It can tell you about other places in the world. Like a man on the news told about the Ammazon rain forest.

In the last sentence the writer adds two relevent pieces of information to the idea introduced in the extension. The writer gives an example of one particular place in the world ("the Ammazon rain forest") about which he or she has learned from television. In addition, the writer specifies from whom this information was learned ("a man on the news").

MODERATELY ELABORATED IDEA

> One good thing about television is you can learn things. It can tell you about other places in the world. Like a man on the news told about the Ammazon rain forest. He told how people are cutting it down. I didn't know about anything about this problem. Now I think we should help the rain forest.

The last three sentences present additional specific information about the kinds of learning experiences television can provide. For example, these sentences identify exactly what the writer has learned about Amazon rain forests, as well as what effect this knowledge has had on the writer. By moderately elaborating on the original idea that "you can learn things" from television, the writer has provided the level of specific detail necessary to contribute to a clear understanding of how television can be considered good.

Elaboration in Persuasive Writing

In a persuasive response the writer must make a choice and then present reasons that provide convincing support for that choice. In order to be convincing, these reasons must be as specific and as detailed as possible, for the specificity and thoroughness with which the writer develops these reasons determine the quality of the elaboration, which in turn directly affects the force of the persuasive argument.

The persuasive prompt in this handbook (see page 200) requires the writer to choose a particular famous person to visit the school and then to convince the principal that this person would be the "best" choice. The following examples of the levels of elaboration have been taken from a typical response, in which the writer has chosen Nolan Ryan, a major league baseball pitcher, as the person he or she would want to visit the school. (The underlined sections represent additional levels of elaboration.)

UNELABORATED IDEA

> Nollan Ryan could teach all the students.

This idea presents one way that students could benefit from Nolan Ryan's visit; however, because the idea is not developed past suggesting that Nolan Ryan might teach students, it does not provide convincing support for the writer's choice.

EXTENDED IDEA

> Nollan Ryan could teach all the students. For ezample he could tell how he piches the ball so fast to batters.

The extension adds one piece of information specifying what Nolan Ryan might teach students (how he pitches so fast).

SOMEWHAT ELABORATED IDEA

> Nollan Ryan could teach all the students. For ezample he could tell how he piches the ball so fast to batters. He could talk about being a perfeshonal baseball picher and how he got so good.

In the last sentence the writer continues to give examples of what students might learn from Nolan Ryan. To the idea that Ryan might talk to students about his ability to pitch fast balls, the writer attaches two additional ideas (what it's like to be a professional baseball player and how Ryan developed his baseball skill). These additional ideas strengthen the persuasiveness of the writer's argument.

MODERATELY ELABORATED IDEA

> Nollan Ryan could teach all the students. For ezample he could tell how he piches the ball so fast to batters. He could talk about being a perfeshonal baseball picher and how he got so good. He might even pich for the classes and show us how to strike some one out.

The writer improves upon the somewhat elaborated idea by presenting an altogether different way that students might benefit from a visit by Nolan Ryan--that is, they might get to see him pitch as well as to hear him talk about pitching and professional baseball. By moderately elaborating on the original idea that "Nollan Ryan could teach all the students," the writer has provided the level of specific detail necessary to help convince the principal to accept Nolan Ryan as the "best" possible choice to visit the school.

RETHINKING AND CLARIFYING THE DRAFT: THE REVISION STAGE

What is Revision?

Revision can be thought of as a three-part process: asking questions about a piece of writing, exploring alternative ways to express ideas, and deciding what changes to make in the piece. Revision occurs whenever the writer reexamines a piece of writing and makes changes so that the writing better communicates his or her thoughts. The changes made during the revision process may include any elements that make the message more effective. The writer may look at such features as organization, word choice, sentence structure, elaboration, and purpose. The writer may add, delete, substitute, or reorganize material. During this phase of the writing process, the writer focuses on content--what ideas to express and how to express them--leaving the correction of usage and mechanical errors for a later time.

Helping Students to Revise

An assumption sometimes made is that students can look at their writing and know what needs to be improved and what kinds of changes to make. In reality, students need to be shown how to revise. Without experience in revision, young writers may tend to see their first draft of a piece as a finished product. When given the opportunity to do a second draft, they may merely recopy their first draft more neatly, occasionally making a few mechanical corrections. Students need to be shown revision strategies and to be given frequent opportunities to practice them. Below are several ideas on teaching revision that some teachers have found to be helpful.

Modeling

Modeling revision for students can be very beneficial, particularly in the early stages of writing instruction and with young writers. It is helpful for beginning writers to see examples of the kinds of questions one can ask about a piece of writing and of the kinds of changes that one might make to a piece. One way to model revision is to work with the class on a piece of writing displayed on a chart or transparency. This might be an anonymous piece, a sample of the teacher's own writing, or a paper from the class (but one without too many distracting mechanical errors). By asking the students appropriate questions about the piece and getting their input on both the strengths of the writing and the ways in which it might be improved, the teacher is actually providing students with concrete examples of how to approach revision of their own writing.

Conferencing

Talking to students one-on-one in brief conferences about their own writing allows the teacher to focus on the specific strengths, needs, and writing difficulties of each student. It also provides an additional opportunity to model revision. While it is important to teach young writers how to improve upon their writing, it may be even more important to teach them to value what they have written. Therefore, an important first step in working with individual students is to identify the strengths of the piece of writing. In addition to the powerful motivational advantage of helping a beginning writer to value his or her own writing, emphasizing its strengths helps the writer to see what parts of the writing are most appealing to the reader and should therefore be expanded and emphasized. Once a piece's strengths have been addressed, then possible revisions can be explored. It may be useful, particularly when revising with beginning writers, to focus on only one or two revision issues at a time so that the student does not feel overwhelmed.

Mini-Lessons

A critical component of helping students to revise is giving them the skills they need to make appropriate changes. One way to demonstrate these skills in the context of student writing is to use "mini-lessons"--brief lessons focusing on a specific problem or revision strategy and using sample writing to illustrate the point. For example, a mini-lesson about sentence fragments might involve identifying the fragments in a piece of writing and having the class transform them into complete sentences. A lesson on elaboration might involve examining a piece of writing to show how more specific language would improve the overall effectiveness of the piece. Students could then be given the opportunity to apply the same principle to a piece of their own writing.

Peer Revision

One effective way for students to learn to revise is to read (or hear) each other's work. Beginning writers can learn a great deal about writing both from giving feedback and from receiving it. However, it is important that students be trained in this process and that they be given specific guidelines, such as questions to ask about a piece of writing (e.g., What was this piece of writing about?), phrases to use (e.g., The part I liked best was . . .), a checklist, or some other tool to help focus their attention.

Shared Responsibility

During the revision process it is important for the student to feel a sense of responsibility for his or her own writing. For example, it may be useful to allow the student to choose the piece of writing he or she will revise, to make the final decisions about what changes to make, and to write in the changes himself or herself. The student is more likely to feel fully involved in the revision process when he or she retains some control over the piece.

"Marking Up" A Draft

In addition to helping beginning writers with the tasks of examining a piece of writing and of deciding what changes to make, it may be useful to show them how to mark these changes on their drafts. They may benefit from practical suggestions for managing revision, such as double-spacing on each draft to leave room to write in changes, writing drafts on one side of the paper so that they can cut and paste, crossing out words rather than trying to erase them, and circling words that they want to come back to later. It is particularly important for students to see that "messing up" a paper is perfectly acceptable and is, in fact, an important component of revision.

Practice

In order to learn how to revise, students must have the opportunity to practice frequently with many different kinds of writing. The more opportunities they have to revise, the more they are likely to internalize the process and apply it to their writing independently.

Questions to Ask About a Piece of Writing

Improving a piece of writing involves asking many different kinds of questions about the piece. Behind the larger question of how the message may be communicated most effectively lie numerous smaller questions pertaining to such issues as purpose, clarity, organization, elaboration, word choice, and sentence structure. Some of the kinds of questions that might be addressed with respect to a piece of writing include the following:

Purpose/Topic/Audience

- What is the piece about?
- What is the author's purpose for writing?
- Has the writer stayed on topic?
- Who is the intended audience?

Clarity

- Are all parts clear to the reader?
- Has information been left out that the reader needs to know?

Organization

- Is there a more effective or logical way to arrange the ideas?
- Are there parts of the piece that are unnecessary?
- Has the writer repeated the same ideas unnecessarily?
- Are there digressions, or are there loose ends?
- Are transitions clearly marked?
- Is there a beginning, middle, and end?

Word Choice

- Has the writer used words correctly?
- Has the writer used specific, concrete words rather than vague, general words?
- Has the writer used active verbs?
- Is the language vivid?

Elaboration

- Has the writer provided details and specific examples?
- Has the writer used anecdotes and illustrations where appropriate?
- Has the writer developed the ideas fully?
- Has the writer developed ideas consistently throughout the paper?

Sentence Structure

- Are the sentences complete?
- Are the sentences clear?
- Has the writer used a variety of sentence structures?
- Has the writer combined ideas where appropriate to produce more effective sentences?

Questions such as these may provide a useful starting point when working with students to revise a piece of writing. Once students have experience answering other readers' questions about their writing, they can begin to internalize the process, asking these kinds of questions for themselves. To further this process, some students may benefit from the use of a revision checklist. A checklist might consist initially of one or two questions worded very simply. The list could then be expanded as students acquire additional revision skills. For younger students, a checklist might include questions such as the following:

- What is my topic?
- Is there anything else the reader needs to know?
- Are there any parts of the piece that are confusing?
- Are there parts of the piece I don't really need?
- Are there better words I could use?
- Are my sentences complete sentences?
- Did I use different kinds of sentences?
- Did I put everything in the best possible order?
- Does my piece have a beginning and an ending?

While there are many different kinds of questions that can be asked about a piece of writing, it is important not to overwhelm the student by addressing too many questions at once. Particularly with young writers, it may be preferable to focus on one or two issues at a time. Every issue does not need to be addressed in every piece of writing.

Revision Strategies With Young Writers

The revision strategies that young writers use may differ from those used by older writers. In some cases, teaching young writers to revise may consist primarily of showing them how to add more to their work--how to add details for clarity, for example, or how to sustain a story. In order to learn to think about the words they have used in a piece and what other words might work better, young writers may also particularly benefit from assistance with word choice.

Revising for TAAS

The ability to "resee" a piece of writing and to make appropriate changes to it helps the student to communicate more effectively on all kinds of tasks, including responding to a TAAS prompt. Writing for TAAS is different from classroom writing assignments in two important ways. First, the student does all the writing in one session. Second, the student does not have access to outside resources, such as peer feedback, the teacher, a dictionary, or a grammar book. For these reasons the TAAS composition is scored as a first-draft effort. However, this is not to say that the TAAS writer should not revise. In order to be successful on the TAAS written composition, the writer needs to organize and develop his or her ideas to accomplish a specific writing purpose, activities that are very much tied to revision. The student who has internalized the writing process should know how to reexamine his or her composition without any teacher assistance. That student should be able to use revision to increase the effectiveness of the response.

In order to be successful on the TAAS written composition, students need revision experience with all types of writing eligible for assessment. As students are practicing a particular type of writing, it may be helpful to work with them on revision issues specific to that type of writing, in addition to the more general issues discussed on pages 37-38. Some points that could be examined include the following:

Informative/Descriptive

- Does the writer include specific descriptive details?
- Are specific, concrete words used rather than vague, general words?
- Does the writer proceed in an orderly fashion (describing one element fully before moving on to the next element)?
- Is there extraneous material that does not add to the quality of the description?
- Is the picture, object, person, or place described in enough detail that someone who has not seen it could form a clear visual image of it?
- Does the description tell where objects/features are located?

Informative/Narrative ("How To")

- Does the writer fully explain each step of the process so that someone else could repeat the process?
- Does the writer use specific details to make each step of the process clear and vivid?
- Does the writer list the steps in the right order?
- Does the writer move in an orderly fashion, completing one step before moving on to the next step?
- Does the writer use transitional words to move from step to step?

Expressive/Narrative

- Does the writer use specific and vivid details to enhance the story line?
- Does the story move forward through time?
- Does the story have a clear beginning and ending?
- Are there any confusing spots where the writer needs to provide more information?
- Does the story have any unexplained shifts in time or location?
- Is there extraneous material that interrupts the flow of the story?

Informative/Classificatory

- Are the objects classified according to the specified criteria (e.g., the good/bad qualities of something; how two things are both alike and different)?
- Does the piece present specific information about the objects?
- Are the connections among ideas clear?
- Does everything in the piece contribute to the classification?

Persuasive/Descriptive

- Is the writer's position clearly stated?
- Does the writer present arguments in support of the position?
- Are the writer's arguments supported with specific information and/or examples?
- Does everything in the piece help to support the writer's position?
- Are the connections among ideas logical?

Examples: Revision and TAAS

The writing process for TAAS may take many forms. One student may brainstorm to develop a list of ideas, then rearrange and expand those ideas into a final product. Another may write a rough draft, then mark up that draft extensively before writing a second draft on the lined pages. A third student may do much of the revision work internally, writing just a few notes before moving into a final version.

Following are annotated examples of some of the many ways a student writer might revise when applying the writing process to a TAAS prompt. These examples are based on the prompts included in this handbook. Each example represents a small portion of an entire piece of writing and includes a prewriting activity and/or first draft, revisions, and a final version in which additions and substitutions made during revision have been underlined.

Persuasive/Descriptive Writing

EXCERPT FROM FIRST DRAFT

to our school
I think
^ You should invite Micheal Jordann
because he can teach us things
^ He can teach us ~~how~~ to be better
atletes He can talk about drugs
and
^ He can tell us to just say no.
Also he can show us how to pass to the basket
and ~~shoot~~ ~~I saw him play last~~
~~week but the Bulls lost any way.~~
dunk
the ball

EXCERPT FROM FINAL DRAFT

I would like you to invite Micheal Jordann to visit our school because I think that he could teach us a lot of important stuff. For example he can show us how to be better athletes. He can teach us how to pass to the basket and how to dunk the ball. Another good thing is he could talk to us about drugs and he could tell us to just say no because drugs are bad for you!

This writer made a number of different kinds of revisions to his piece. He reorganized the piece so that two related ideas are now next to each other (showing the students how to be better athletes and teaching them to pass and shoot) and eliminated a sentence which did not contribute to the persuasive purpose of the piece ("I saw him play last week but the Bulls lost anyway"). He also developed each idea more completely. For example, in the first draft the writer mentioned that Jordan could teach the students how to pass and shoot. In the second draft he developed this idea further, being more specific about what exactly Jordan would teach them about passing (passing to the basket) and shooting (dunking the ball). In addition, the writer adjusted the first sentence of the letter to better fit the audience (from "You should invite" to "I think you should invite" to "I would like you to invite"). Finally, he established clearer links among ideas by using transitional phrases (e.g., "For example..." and "Another good thing is...").

about watching TV
a good thing ^ is you can
see some really good
shows.* ^ a bad thing
is you can hurt your
if you watch for too long
eyes ^. Another good
thing is you can watch
the news ^ and you can find
out everything that
happened to day

* Like the Cosbys show
and Growing Pains and
Cartoons on Saturday

Informative/Classificatory Writing

EXCERPT FROM FIRST DRAFT

about watching TV
a good thing ^ is you can
see some really good
shows.* a bad thing
is you can hurt your
if you watch for too long
eyes ^. Another good
thing is you can watch
the news ^ and you can find
out everything that
happened today
* Like the Cosbys show
and Growing Pains and
Cartoons on Saturday

EXCERPT FROM FINAL DRAFT

> **A good thing about watching TV is you can see some really good shows. Like the Cosbys show and Growing Pains and Cartoons on Saturday. Another good thing is you can watch the news and you can find out everything that happened today. A bad thing is you can hurt your eyes if you watch for too long.**

In her first draft this writer presented three unelaborated ideas--two advantages and one disadvantage of watching television. In the second draft she expanded on each of these bare ideas, adding specific information to explain and/or illustrate them. For example, in the first draft she mentioned that a disadvantage is that you can hurt your eyes. In the second draft she added a piece of information to clarify this idea (". . . if you watch for too long"). The writer also improved the organization of the piece, discussing the two advantanges before addressing the disadvantage.

Expressive/NarrativeWriting

In this example based on the response (N-15) on page 157, the writer approached revision somewhat differently. She began by charting the episodes in her story, then took each episode and addressed it separately, writing one or two preliminary drafts before doing a final version. Included in this example are both early and final drafts of the first two episodes in the story.

EXCERPTS FROM EARLY DRAFTS

sees stone

~~one day I found~~
~~Something shiny on~~
~~the road~~

~~one day I was~~
~~walking along and I~~
~~saw something shiny~~

One day I was
walking along the
road and I saw
something sparkling
on the sidewalk

picks it up

~~I thought it was a~~
~~nickle. I picked it~~
~~up and it changed~~
~~colors.~~

~~At first I thought~~
~~it was a quarter but~~
~~then I could tell it~~
~~was only a stone.~~
~~So I picked it up~~
~~and it got bigger and~~
~~it changed colors.~~

At first I thought it
was a quarter but when
I got closer I could tell
it was only a stone. I
was mad but I picked it
up anyway. Then the stone
got bigger and it
changed colors.

EXCERPT FROM FINAL DRAFT

> One day I was walking along the road and I saw something sparkling on the sidewalk. At first I thought it was a quarter, but when I got closer I could tell it was only a stone. I was mad but I picked it up anyway. Then the stone got bigger and it changed colors.

The writer began with a bare, minimally elaborated version of each episode in the narrative sequence. She gradually expanded each episode, adding details and choosing more effective words in order to create a more vivid version of each episode. Her final result is extremely effective and allows the reader to visualize exactly what happened the day she found the pink stone.

"CLEANING UP" THE DRAFT: THE EDITING STAGE

What is Editing?

Once the writer has generated ideas, developed them into a draft, and revised the piece for content and organization, he or she is ready to address the grammatical and mechanical errors in a piece. In this handbook this stage of the writing process is referred to as the editing stage. The term "editing" is used to refer to all of the activities and strategies that the writer uses to remove errors from a piece of writing. The word "proofreading," often used synonymously with editing, is used in this handbook to refer to the final reading of a piece, during which the writer makes a final check for remaining errors.

Addressing error correction only after the writer feels satisfied with the content and organization of a piece can be particularly beneficial for young writers. It is sometimes difficult for children to concentrate on more than one task at a time. If the child becomes overly concerned about errors in the early stages of writing a piece, he or she may be distracted from the task of deciding what to say and how to say it. In addition, he or she may be less apt to take compositional risks and more likely to focus on whether or not each word or sentence is "right." On the other hand, if the child knows that errors will be addressed in the final stages of writing a piece, he or she is free to concentrate on the effective communication of ideas during the early stages of writing.

Helping Students to Edit

To say that correcting errors might best be done in the later stages of writing is not to say that editing is not important. Errors interfere with communication by impeding the reader's ability to understand the ideas the writer is trying to communicate. Therefore, it is important for the writer to learn how to identify and correct errors before pronouncing a piece to be finished.

Helping student writers to edit their work may involve many of the same strategies as helping them to revise. For example, it may be particularly helpful to model editing, to provide frequent opportunities for practice, and to allow the student to select the pieces that he or she will edit.

Editing Strategies

Editing can be approached in many different ways. Following are a number of ideas that some teachers have used effectively to manage editing in the classroom.

- Cultivate a healthy attitude toward errors

Correcting errors is an integral part of the writing process. Cultivating a healthy attitude toward errors may be very reassuring for young writers, who need to understand that all writers make errors and that making errors does not mean they are poor writers.

- Hold editing conferences

The purpose of the editing conference is to work on the individual student's strengths and weaknesses. The editing conference focuses specifically on error removal and mechanical skills rather than on content or organization. Like the revision conference, the editing conference should begin with identification of strengths and successes. When working individually with young writers, it may be most beneficial to address one or two types of errors at a time. Concentrating on only one or two skill areas at a time allows the student to master and internalize those skills more readily than if he or she tries to absorb a wide range of mechanics and usage rules all at once.

- Have the student read a piece several times for different purposes

The successful editor uses a variety of techniques to find different kinds of errors. For example, when checking for end marks, the editor reads carefully for sentence sense. However, when checking for capitalization of the first word of a sentence, the editor skims to an end mark and checks thoroughly only the next word. One technique for identifying errors, then, is to read through a piece several times, focusing each time on a particular type of error.

- Have the student check the piece against a checklist

This may be an individual checklist developed for each student and attached to his or her writing folder. It may also be a large, more generic chart used by all students. The checklist, whether for an individual or a group, may be modified as students acquire additional skills.

- Have the student identify possible misspellings on early drafts

When a student is not sure of the spelling of words, circling or underlining them immediately has several advantages. If the student writes the word several times during drafting, the word may begin to look acceptable, and the student may forget his or her initial uncertainty about the spelling. By marking the problem words early on, the student acquires the habit of identifying words that need to be checked. In addition, this allows the student to continue to write without being distracted by concerns about possible spelling errors.

- Have the student read backwards for spelling errors

One technique to help student writers find spelling errors they might overlook in a quick reading is to have them read the paper backwards, looking at one word at a time and looking specifically for spelling errors.

- Have the student keep a list of frequently misspelled words

Another technique to help students minimize spelling errors is to have each student keep a list of words that he or she frequently misspells and, during the editing process, check each piece of writing to be edited against that list.

- Use peer editing

Peer editing can be an important source of feedback for young writers when those giving feedback are given specific guidelines to follow. One way to use peer editing is to have an editing circle, in which a paper is passed around a small group, with each member looking at the paper for a different type of error. Another way to use peer editing is to have several stronger students function as an editing team to whom the other students can bring their work.

- Create an editing table

One way to manage the editing phase is to have an editing table where students may go to use dictionaries and other resources necessary for successful editing. An editing team might sit at this table as well.

- Have the student proofread the final draft before turning it in

After applying various editing strategies, the student may want to do a final proofreading to check for any remaining errors. Reading the piece aloud may be particularly useful during this stage. If the student has recopied a piece, he or she may want to compare the recopied version word-for-word with the previous version.

- Act as the final editor

One of the most important aspects of teaching instruction is teaching students to internalize the writing process and to use all the resources available to them. When student writers learn to edit, they discover procedures they can use to correct their own work. When a student has gone through all of these procedures and pronounces a piece finished, then the piece is ready for the teacher, who will be the final editor.

- Spare the red pen

In order to encourage beginning writers to take compositional risks, it is critical to reinforce risk-taking. One way to do this is to be very sparing in marking up a paper, particularly in correcting errors. Marking all of the errors on a paper can both discourage and overwhelm a young writer. One alternative to circling all of the errors on a piece is to record on a separate note card the kinds of errors made, limiting comments made on the piece itself to one or two types of errors. These cards can then serve as a resource for the teacher in planning instruction and future editing conferences.

- Publish selected pieces of writing

"Publishing" selected pieces of writing may help students to view their writing as a way to communicate a message and may provide them with a motivation for finding and correcting errors. Publication of a piece may be accomplished in any number of ways, such as posting it on a bulletin board or creating a class "book" that contains a piece of writing from everyone in the class.

Helping Students to Master Mechanical Skills

An important part of learning to edit for errors is learning correct usage and mechanics. Students must first master these language skills before they can successfully edit for errors in their own writing. Some of the kinds of skills that might be addressed in the classroom include the following:

- Punctuation
- Capitalization
- Spelling
- Subject-verb agreement
- Correct usage of verb tense
- Correct usage of pronouns
- Correct usage of adjectives and adverbs
- Sentence structure

Below are some specific strategies that teachers might use to help young writers improve their skills in language usage and mechanics.

- Teach skills in the context of student writing

Many teachers have reported that usage and mechanics are best learned when taught in the context of student writing rather than in isolation through drills and exercises. When students apply their knowledge of a skill to their own writing, they often develop a "feel" for the skill, an experience that students learning through worksheets do not seem to share.

- Teach skills through mini-lessons

One way to teach skills in the context of student writing is to begin with a mini-lesson on a specific skill, illustrating the skill through a piece of writing. Students can then work in small groups on a specific task related to that skill. For example, the teacher presents a lesson on end punctuation by having groups look at end punctuation in a piece of writing. Each student then examines the end punctuation in a piece of his or her own writing.

- Reinforce skill acquisition through writing

Once a skill has been presented, it can be reinforced by having students focus on that skill in a particular piece of writing, by having them add it to the editing checklist, or, for students who are having particular difficulties, by conferencing with them on that skill.

- Teach skills as the need arises

An important issue in teaching language skills is determining the order in which to focus on specific skills. One approach is to examine student writing and present those skills that are posing particular difficulties for students. For example, if students have become interested in writing dialogue for a narrative but do not understand how to punctuate dialogue, a presentation on the use of quotation marks would be timely.

- Have students write often

One of the most effective ways for students to learn language skills is to write often. The more practice young writers have writing, revising, and editing, the better their language skills will likely become.

- Have students read frequently

Students learn writing skills through reading as well as through writing. Once they become familiar with the writing process, they will begin to approach reading from the point of view of a writer and will begin to notice how authors use language and mechanics.

Editing and the TAAS Composition

Because the TAAS composition is written in one sitting and is scored as a first-draft effort, editing is less critical on the TAAS written composition than are some other aspects of the writing process. However, students who have learned to edit their own work will be able to scrutinize their compositions and identify and correct many of the errors. While they cannot check their spelling in a dictionary, they can look over punctuation, capitalization, and usage, applying the language skills they have acquired at the time of testing. In addition, they can proofread for careless errors.

Editing/Proofreading and the Multiple-Choice Portion of TAAS

Students are asked to apply editing and proofreading skills on the multiple-choice portion of the TAAS test. This portion of the TAAS test assesses students' mastery of the conventions of standard English, as well as their ability to edit and proofread. Because these skills are assessed in the context of reading a passage and correcting the errors it contains, the best preparation for the multiple-choice section of the TAAS writing test is to teach students to find and correct the errors in their own or a peer's writing.

Three skill areas are assessed in the multiple-choice portion of the TAAS writing test: sentence structure, usage, and language mechanics. These skill areas correspond to Objectives 5, 6, and 7 of the *TAAS English Language Arts Writing Objectives and Measurement Specifications.*

Sentence Structure

Objective 5: The student will recognize appropriate sentence construction within the context of a written passage.

At Grade 5, items for this objective will assess the following instructional targets:

- Recognize complete sentences and avoid fragments and run-ons
- Combine sentence parts and sentences to produce a variety of sentence structures including basic sentence patterns and variations

These skills are tested in the context of a written passage that may contain fragments; run-ons; short, choppy sentences; and correctly formed sentences. The student must choose the best sentence structure for each underlined portion of the passage, making the same kinds of decisions that he or she makes when looking at sentence structure in his or her own writing.

Usage

Objective 6: The student will recognize appropriate English usage within the context of a written passage.

At Grade 5, items for this objective will assess the following instructional targets:

- Use the correct subject, object, and possessive forms of pronouns
- Use correct subject-verb agreement with personal pronouns and compound subjects
- Recognize correct verb tense and correct form of tense of irregular verbs
- Use the correct forms of adjectives and adverbs

These skills are again tested in the context of a written passage. The passage contains numbered blanks. For each blank the student must decide which of four choices would correctly complete the sentence. Again, this activity represents the kind of decision-making in which young writers engage when editing their own writing.

Mechanics

Objective 7: The student will recognize appropriate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation within the context of a written passage.

At Grade 5, items for this objective will assess the following instructional targets:

- Use the fundamentals of spelling
- Use appropriate capitalization
- Use the fundamentals of punctuation

This objective, like Objective 5, assesses the student's ability to look at a piece of writing and to identify errors in the piece. The student reads a brief passage containing several underlined sections, each of which may or may not have an error in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation. Just as he or she must do when reviewing his or her own writing, the student must first decide whether an error exists and, if so, which kind of error it is. This section assesses the student's ability to apply proofreading skills to a piece of writing. As with the other sections of the multiple-choice portion of the test, the more experience a student has editing and proofreading pieces of writing, the better he or she will likely perform on the test items.

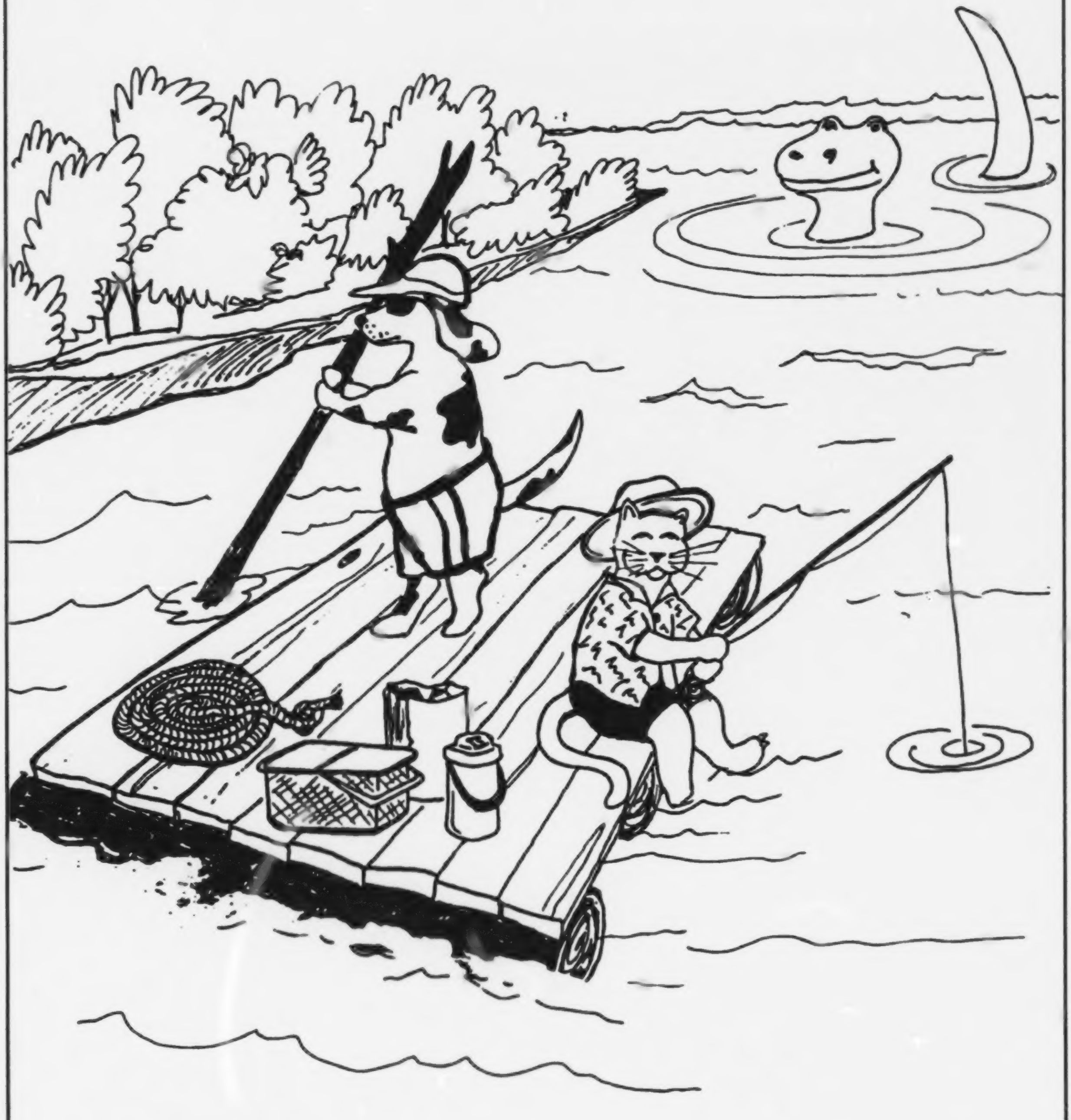
Part 2

TAAS Scoring Guides and Sample Student Responses

TAAS Grade 5 Scoring Guide for Informative / Descriptive Writing

DESCRIPTIVE

Here is a picture of a cat and a dog on a raft. Look at the picture and write a composition for your teacher in which you describe what you see.



SCORE POINT 0

0 = RESPONSES THAT ARE NOT SCORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE BLANK OR FAIL IN OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE TASK. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "0" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses in which the student writes on an entirely different topic than the one specified.***
- ***Responses in which the student makes an attempt to respond, but this attempt contains so little writing that the reader cannot discern whether the student is responding to the prompt.***
- ***Responses in which the student repeats or paraphrases the prompt but does not attempt to respond to it.***
- ***Responses in which the student writes entirely in a language other than English.***
- ***Responses that are completely unreadable because they are illegible or incoherent.*** Illegible responses are those in which the handwriting cannot be read; letters may be discernible, but they do not form recognizable words. Incoherent responses are those in which letters or words are strung together in a meaningless fashion.
- ***Responses that contain nothing more than an explicit refusal to respond to the specified prompt, although the student may offer some explanation of his or her refusal.***
- ***Blank papers.***

SCORE POINT 1

1 = RESPONSES THAT ARE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT PAINTING A PICTURE OF THE OBJECT OR SCENE IN THE READER'S MIND. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "1" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that use the wrong purpose/mode; i.e., they do not include the requisite components of informative/descriptive writing.*** In these responses the writer does not use descriptive words and/or phrases to paint a picture of the object or scene specified in the prompt.

- ***Responses that are informative/descriptive but are unsuccessful in their presentation.*** Responses that attempt to describe but are not successful may take the following forms:

  - Responses that contain a brief phrase with some indication of an attempt to attend to the task.

  - Responses that are lists of descriptive words and/or phrases.

  - Responses that are so brief and unelaborated that the reader can obtain only a vague impression of the picture.

  - Responses that contain elaboration, but the elaboration is mainly nonspecific or extraneous.

  - Responses that attend very briefly to the task but do not remain on the topic. These responses acknowledge the assignment but then switch to another topic.

- ***Responses that are poorly organized.*** These responses are so poorly organized that the reader is confused and is unable to discern even a vague picture of the scene or object. Poor organization may be caused by excessive rambling and/or repetition.

- ***Responses that exhibit an overall lack of control of written language so that communication is impaired.*** The expression of the writer's thoughts is so confusing that the reader is left wondering what the writer is attempting to say.

  - At the word level there may be repeated errors in the spelling of basic words, in word choice, and/or in usage.

  - At the sentence level confusion occurs when words are not arranged in a logical order, or when there is an apparent order but the meaning is nevertheless unclear. It is inappropriate for readers to guess at the writer's intent or to make inferences about the writer's meaning.

  - At the composition level responses lack explicit connections between ideas, and attempts at illustrations of ideas are either irrelevant or repetitious.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

The dog has a hat.
He has a pole.
he has pants.
He has glasses.
The cat has a hat.
He has a shirt.
He has pants.
I see a monster.
I see a rope.
And a basket.
And a bag.
And a bottle.
I see a raft in the water.
The land has trees.
The water has waves.
The cat is fishing.

The writer attempted to respond to the prompt. However, the response is unsuccessful because it does no more than list features that give the reader only a vague impression of the picture. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to elaborate by doing one or more of the following: add more descriptive details to the existing features/ objects, include specific descriptions of more features/ objects, and/or locate some features/objects in relation to others. The writer needs remediation in how to develop ideas to create an accurate mental image of a scene.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

one Day ther was a cat and Dog. one Day thr was a Dog and cat on a raft and the Dog is hold on to a branch and a cat is holding a poll and Nit to thy cat Momsr ctn tunn prtte piknik bskrit is a rope rite cluse behinde the raft a mrnstre its tale is pinty and it has a big fase rite in front of the monstr is is a lstu of tree.

This response is an attempt at description, but it is unsuccessful because of severe language control problems that at times leave the reader wondering what the writer is trying to say. Word omissions and extensive misspellings of basic words cause confusion, and the words immediately preceding "prtte piknik bskrit" are indecipherable. The writer needs remediation in basic language skills. Continued language instruction and frequent opportunities to write should help the writer to gain better language control and greater fluency.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

Long ago on a forign planet there was a very unusal dog and a very unusal cat. The dog's name was Frank. The cat's name was Jesse. They were very good friends. They loved to fish. They were on a raft. Boy did they look funny. The dog looked weired with his red and white clothes on. Dogs don't usally have clothes on. His clothes were funny looking. And he had a big nose two big ears, and four short legs, but he was standing on his back legs. And he had a tail. and he could talk just like a human. The cat had clothes on too. They were blue and yellow and he could talk. He had wiskers and two legs and two arms and a tail. They had a whole lot of picnic things with them. I bet you never saw such funny animals before.

Although this response is rather lengthy, almost all of the elaboration is ineffective because it provides only vague and general information (e.g., his clothes were "red and white" and "funny looking;" he had "big ears," "short legs"); extraneous, nonvisual information (e.g., "could talk just like a human," "were very good friends"); or obvious information (e.g., the cat "had wiskers and two legs and two arms and a tail"). Such elaboration does not help the reader to envision the scene clearly. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to eliminate this ineffective elaboration, including instead more specific, visually descriptive details about the features/objects in the picture. It would be especially important for the writer to learn the difference between effective and ineffective methods of elaboration in a description.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

In the picture acat and adog are take a trip down the river. On the left of the river is bushes of trees. Their is a friendly dinsour inthe water. Their is a raft it has a cat and a dog on it The dog is wearing a hat and some shorts and is move the raft down the river. Also the cat is wearing a hat, a shirt and shorts and is fishing. Also the raft is some rope anda bag, basket and acup. I hope they have a nice trip.

This response contains some descriptive information through the location of features/objects (e.g., trees on the "left of the river;" "dinsour in the water") but lacks sufficient specific description to be minimally successful. Much of the response is vague and general; for example, the reader knows that the dog is wearing a hat, a shirt, and shorts but cannot visualize what these pieces of clothing look like. In addition, the writer includes incomplete information; that is, the writer mentions that the dog is moving the raft down the river but doesn't explain how. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to improve the overall quality of the elaboration. The writer would benefit from remediation in how to use specific details and spatial location in a description to paint a clearer picture of a scene.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

One warm sunny day Cindy and Ralf were sailing on a raft. Cindy was wearing shorts and a teshard and she was fishing. Ralf was rowing. suddenly they saw the lake move. Cindy yelled "It's a dinosaur". The dinasour had a long thick pointy tail. The dinasour came up and said "Hi My Name is Tina!. "I just want to be friend with you two. Ralf said "Tina do you want to get on "Sure I would, but I'm too big I'll sink it down so they had a fine time playing and having a convrasation.

Although the writer includes some descriptive elements in this response, he or she does not include enough of the requisite components of informative/descriptive writing to be minimally successful. The writer places the cat and dog on a raft, briefly describes what the cat is wearing and what the dog is doing, and later describes the dinosaur's tail. However, for the major portion of the response, the writer deviates from the descriptive task to tell a story about what happens when the cat and dog meet the dinosaur. The writer appears to be unclear about how to write a sustained description and would therefore benefit from remediation in descriptive writing, especially with regard to the ways in which a description and a narrative differ. Having frequent opportunities to write both descriptions and narratives would be a vital part of this learning process.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

SCORE POINT 2

2 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT PAINTING A PICTURE OF THE OBJECT OR SCENE IN THE READER'S MIND. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "2" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that present a minimally sufficient amount of descriptive details.*** These responses may take the following forms:
    - Responses that present a lengthy, unelaborated list of sentences containing descriptive details.
    - Responses that present a somewhat elaborated description of the picture.
    - Responses that include a substantial amount of nondescriptive writing. These responses include a somewhat elaborated description of the picture, but the description may be embedded in a narrative. The extraneous material does not assist in painting a clearer picture of the drawing in the reader's mind, though some of these responses may be well written.

- ***Responses in which the organization may be flawed by rambling and/or repetition.*** Although these inconsistencies may disrupt the logical progression of the response, they do not cause confusion.

- ***Responses that exhibit limited control of written language.*** These responses may contain awkward or simple sentence structures, and word choice may be limited. In addition, the responses may include spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage errors that are likely to occur in first-draft writing.

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I see a dog pushing a raft.

The dog has on shorts, sunglasses, and a cap.

There is a cat fishing.

The cat has on a cowboy hat.

He gots a shirt with wigle shapes on it, and shorts.

The raft is a board raft with a curled rop, a lunchbox, a paper bag and a tarmos.

Right in back I see a smiley disnsor.

there is land with trees and bushes.

I see a river with rugh soking water.

This response is a minimally successful attempt to describe the picture. The writer presents a list of details, using precise, rather than general, language. For example, "has on" indicates a more precise location of the hat than "has," and "sunglasses" and "cowboy hat" are more specific than "glasses" and "hat." In addition, this response includes some attempt to locate (e.g., the dinosaur is "right in back" of the raft) and to elaborate (e.g., the cat's shirt has "wigle shapes on it"). To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to include additional specific details. More precise location of the features/objects would also strengthen the response.

SCORE POINT 2

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

What I see is a cat fishing for fish to eat and she is wearing skirt and a cowboy hat. A dog is floating the boat and is wearing some shurts with a sun hat. It has a rope and a basket a jug and a big bag on the rafe. And the cat and the dog are on the rafe. And the dog and the cat have on closes. And there is a funny looking surpend with a grinning face behind them I dont think they see him. And behind the funny looking surpent is a shark I dont think the see him ether. And besides the rafe and the cat and the dog and all the stuff on the raf and the animel in the wather there is a piece of land right by where there fishing at. On the land is lots and lots of trees and bushes. And the dog has on shades and has a long skiny stick to float the rafe. The water was hugh and the rafe was in the water and the dog was floating it. Thisten trees on the land. And skef and water. Thats what I see.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

This response is a minimally successful attempt at visual description. Although there is enough specific descriptive detail, including location, for the reader to have some understanding of the scene, the response has some organizational weaknesses. The writer does not use an overall strategy to progress logically through the picture. The writer first tells what the cat and dog are doing and wearing, then shifts to other items on the raft, then returns to the cat and dog to mention that they are wearing clothes. Then the writer mentions the serpent, then the land, the dog again, and so on, in a seemingly random fashion. This random movement causes the writer to be repetitious in places. For example, the writer begins the response by specifically describing the cat's and the dog's clothing, then several sentences later unnecessarily states that "the dog and the cat have on closes." To achieve a higher score, this writer would need to improve the organization of the response, as well as to add specific descriptive details that would help the reader to visualize the scene more clearly. Practice in using prewriting activities to generate and organize ideas might be of particular benefit to this writer.

SCORE POINT 2

STOP

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

One day I saw a Cat and a Dog fishing on a raft made of boards ontopof logs. The cat had two eyes a nose and a mouth and had a Hawian shirt and shorts on. The dog had on shorts and a baseball cap. The cat was sitting on the raft holding a long fishing pole in his hands. The pole was as long as my gramma's Fishing pole. The dog was standing up and had a long Branch for rowing. On the side of the raft was and long rope just incase of an emergency. The rope looked like a raddler all wond up. Sudenly they herd a Loud growl they looked back and saw the sea monster. The sea Monster had a long fat tail pointing up outof the water. He looked Hungry. His mouth was humongus it was as big across as his hole face. The dog grabbed the rope and made a laso and threw it to the trees on the iland. They both pulled the rope toward the bushy trees. And that was my story of the cat and the dog.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

This response contains some narrative and other extraneous material that does not help to create a clear impression of the scene in the reader's mind; however, the writer includes enough visual description to earn a 2. Although the writer attempts to encase the description in a narrative framework, he or she overemphasizes the narrative element at the end of the response (see last three sentences) and includes a narrative sentence in the middle of the response ("Sudenly they herd a Loud growl..."). In addition, the quality of the elaboration is uneven. For example, action verbs are particularly helpful to the reader in placing the animals in context (e.g., the cat was "sitting" and "holding" a fishing pole, and the dog was "standing up"). Comparing the rope to a wound-up rattler is also visually effective. However, comparing the fishing pole to the grandmother's fishing pole contributes little to the reader's understanding because the reader is not familiar with the grandmother's pole and thus has no frame of reference. The response also contains some description that is obvious (e.g., "the cat had two eyes a nose and a mouth") and therefore cannot be considered effective elaboration. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to include more specific visual details of the features/objects in the scene. Learning to distinguish between effective and ineffective description would be beneficial to the writer in that it would allow him or her to eliminate those details that do not help to create a clear image of the scene in the reader's mind.

SCORE POINT 2

STOP

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

The dog and cat went fishing on a wooden raft The dog had on some black and white shorts and a cap that was large and long. The dog was next to the cat. The cat had on a purple and green shirt. The cat was fishing with a fishing pole. Behind the cat was a small theermous it had a handle on it. beside it was a buckat. Next to it was a small picnic basket. Next to it was a long long rope. there was a wooden raft under the things. In font of them was a seweed monster with a ponted tail and has a long neck a falt face nostrols to blow out of and it has frog eyes in front of that was some trees they are big and some are very small, very tiny trees.

Although this response contains some vague and general description (e.g., "purple and green shirt," "large and long" cap), it includes enough precise, visually descriptive details to be minimally successful. Specifics such as "ponted tail" and "frog eyes" are examples of these types of details. The writer also includes the location of the features/objects described and the relationship of one feature/object to another. Location words such as "next to," "on," "behind," "under," and "in font of" help the reader to envision the scene. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to add a greater number of specific details in order to describe more consistently and fully the features/objects included in the picture.

SCORE POINT 2

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCORE POINT 3

3 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT GOOD ATTEMPTS AT DESCRIBING THE PICTURE. THE READER HAS LITTLE DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WRITER IS ATTEMPTING TO SAY. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "3" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that present a moderately elaborated description of the picture.*** These responses may take the following forms:
    - Responses that present a well-elaborated description of a small set of features.
    - Responses that present a moderately elaborated description of some of the features.
    - Responses that present a number of features that are only somewhat elaborated but have an apparent organizational strategy, although occasional rambling and/or repetition may occur.
    - Responses that present a large number of specific descriptive details about the features but have weak organization. The details presented in these responses, however, are not contradictory.

- ***Responses that exhibit a control of the written language, although errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage may occur in these first-draft attempts.***

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

Long ago on a sunny day a cat and a dog went fishing on a rafft. The rafft was made out of wood and on the bottom there was a huge log with circles on the end. Behind the wodden rafft there was a big big moster with a large flat head and a tail thats bigger than the cat and the dog. There were some trees in front of the rafft. They were very bushy trees. The watter looked really rough it had alot of waves in the watter. The dog was standing up on the rafft and he was wering some shorts that were baggy and a hat with a shade on it he had a huge branch in his hand so he could push the rafft. The dog was white with black spots everwhere. The cat was sitting down. He was fishing. He wore some shorts, and a shart with writing on it. I think it was a teashart. There was a rope a big one, and a preaty picnic basket and a lunch sack with them on the rafft, and a thermos. They were all together in the front of the rafft. The cat caught a lot of fish that day.

The End

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

This response represents a good attempt at describing the picture. The writer uses a narrative framework that serves only to introduce and conclude the response, thereby not detracting from the description. The organizational strategy is clear and encompasses nearly all of the features/objects in the picture. The writer uses effective location throughout the response and avoids introducing any extraneous material when moving from the raft to what surrounds the raft to what is on it. Except for the picnic items, the writer provides some additional details about each feature/object mentioned, without dwelling extensively on any one feature/object. Although there are a few general descriptors (e.g., "big," "preaty"), most are specific (e.g., "flat, "bushy," "baggy,"); and the use of comparison to describe the monster's tail helps the reader to form a clear visual image of it. To achieve a score point 4, the writer would need to include additional specific descriptive details about some of the features/objects described in the response.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I'm going to descride a dog anda cat. The fuzzy cat was sitting on the edge of the wooden raft in the lake. The dog was pushing the wooden raft with a branch from a tree. The dog was spotted and had shorts and a hat and sunglasses on. They had a rope and a picnic basket and a lunch sack and a Thermos with some water on the raft also. Three logs were making the wooden raft float. A big ugly Sea monster was swimming behind them in the lake. His head was as big as godzillas face. His eyes were poping out of his head like a frog. His nostrils were like big circles. And he looked like he was smilling. His tail was big and pointed. There were some bushy trees on the nearby land and the lake was as gourgus as the sun gleming on it.

This response represents a good attempt at describing the picture. It moves in an organized fashion from the animals and equipment on the raft, to the raft itself, to the monster, to the land, and finally to the lake. Although the writer lists the items on the raft without elaborating on them, the precise word choice throughout the response and the amount of description included about the sea monster help the response to achieve the elaboration characteristic of a score of 3. Note, for example, the precision of the words in the second sentence: "fuzzy," "sitting," "edge," "wooden raft," "in the lake." All of these words convey specific visual information about the cat. The description of the monster is particularly effective through the use of apt similes (e.g., "His head was as big as godzillas face") and action verbs (e.g., "swimming," "poping," "smilling"). To achieve a score point 4, the writer would need to include more elaboration of some of the features/objects in the scene (e.g., of the wooden raft or the dog's clothing), along with more location of the features/objects.

SCORE POINT 3

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I see a spotted dog who thinks he's cool named Bill. He's with his cool cat friend Bob, fishing in a river. They are on a raft that looks strong and sturdy. Bill is on the left side of the raft and he is pushing it with a huge stick almost like a tree branch. While Bob is fishing on the other side of the raft. He is sitting down with one foot in the water. On the front of the raft there is a picnic basket and a rope that is curled up like a snake. It is next to a paper bag and a thermos jug. The raft is made of boards that are on top of three logs. Both Bill and Bob are wearing hats. Bills hat looks like a baseball hat and Bob's looks like a cowboy hat. Bill is wearing shorts with a stripe down the side and Bob has shorts on that do not have a stripe. Both of their tails stick out of the back of their shorts. The picnic basket has a top on it to keep the food clean. Bob has on a shirt with short sleeves and wavy desines all over it. Bill Is only on wearing suglasses.

Behind them in the water is something looks like a sea monster. I can see only it's head and tail. The rest of it is in the water. The head looks sarta like a frog

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

head but it has a long neck. It's eyes stick up on the top of its head. It looks friendly because it is smiling It's tail looks like a shark tail but longer.

There is also land with trees that are full of leaves.

Although this response contains some minor organizational problems, the level of visual information presented is such that the response represents a good attempt at describing most of the features in the picture. To paint a clear picture, the writer makes good use of location (e.g., "on the left side," "on the front of," "on top of," "out of the back of") and action verbs (e.g., "fishing," "pushing," "wearing"). Additional effective devices include comparisons (e.g., "tail looks like a shark tail but longer," "rope that is curled up like a snake") and precise word choice (e.g., "baseball hat, "thermas jug," "suglasses"). To achieve a score point 4, the writer would need to elaborate more fully on some of the features/objects in the scene (e.g., the raft and the land) and to strengthen the organization, describing one feature at a time rather than interspersing information about the raft and the picnic items between descriptions of Bill and Bob.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I see a funny picture of a cat and a dog on a raft. The cat is sitting down on the right side of the raft and is holding a rod and reel. The fishing line is in the water. Also the cat's legs are hanging over the side of the raft. The cat is wearing a sun hat. And her pointy ears are sticking up in front of it. She is smiling and her eyes look like upside down half moons with little dots hanging from the middle of them. She is wearing a shirt. The shirt is buttoned and it has ziggzaggy lines all over it. The skirt comes almost to her knees and her tail lays in an S-shape on the raft.

The dog is standing on tiptoes on the other side of the raft. He is a Dalmasion with big spots all over him. He is making the raft move in the water by pushing a pole. The pole is at least two times as tall as the dog. The dog is wearing a baseball cap, and sunglasses and baggy shorts that are like bermuda shorts. They have a stripe around the waste and a wider stripe down the side of them. Also, his tail sticks out the back of the shorts and is pointed and curves up on the end.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

This organized response differs from the other responses that received 3s in that it primarily describes the cat and dog. That is, instead of giving a somewhat elaborated description of a number of features, the writer presents a consistent, well-elaborated description of a small set of features. There is effective use of location (e.g., "the cat's legs are hanging over the side of the raft"), precise language (e.g., "pointy ears," "standing on tiptoes," "Dalmasion"), and effective figurative language ("her eyes look like upside down half moons with little dots hanging from the middle of them"). To achieve a score point 4, the writer would need only to apply this level of elaboration to some of the other features/objects in the picture.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

SCORE POINT 4

4 = RESPONSES THAT ARE CONSISTENT AND ELABORATED INFORMATIVE DESCRIPTIONS. THE INCONSISTENCIES THAT MAY OCCUR ARE OVERWHELMED BY THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE. THESE RESPONSES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY MOST OF THE FOLLOWING:

- ***A specific, well-elaborated description.*** Generally the writer will describe a lengthy set of features elaborated through the use of figurative language and/or rich detail.

- ***A consistent organizational strategy.*** Although minor lapses may occur, the response has a clear sense of order and completeness. If an otherwise well-written response ends abruptly because the writer has run out of space, the paper is still eligible for a "4."

- ***Consistent control of the written language.*** Though the writer may not incorporate all of the appropriate mechanics or conventions of language, the response is particularly effective.

In addition, these responses may present some special feature that makes them particularly effective, such as:

- Varied syntactic constructions, including compound and complex sentences.
- Effective word choice, including apt or striking words, phrases, or expressions.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

A raFt is Floating down a river. It is close to land. On the raFt there is a cat and a dog and some things For a picnic. They are being Followed by a sea monster.

THe river looks peaceFul. It doesnt have many waves and they are all bitty. They are not big enuF to make the raFt bounse very much. The water goes up to the land and then there is a kind oF wall with strips on it and then behind the wall there are trees. I think it is a woods or a Forest because a whole lot oF trees are all bunched up together. It doesnt look like there is even room to walk in Between the trees. Or room For sun to come through all the leaFs.

The raFt in the river is made out oF wood. It has boards held up by 3 logs going acrossways. The boards are kinda rough looking. They need to Be Sanded. One board has a nothole in it. I dont think the dog and cat are very heavy because the raFt is high in the water. You can almost see the bottom oF the logs.

A dog is on the leFt side oF the raFt. He is giding the raFt with a

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

tree limb. The limb is taller than the dog and it doesnt have leaFs on it. The dog is sTanding up on his back legs and has spots all over him and on his ears and tail. He is looking at the woods For birds. His eyes are pertected by sunglasses and a sun vizer on his baseball hat. He has on shorts but they are too big For him they go all the way down to his heels. They have a strip down the side and a hole in the back For his tail to stick out.

A cat is setting down on the right side of the raFt. She is Fishing. She is holding her Fishing rodd in both hands and has the line in the water. She has on a sun hat with a wide rim all around to pertect her eyes From the sun. Her shirt has a coller and short sleeves and pictures OF mountans all over it. She has a plain skirt that shows her Knees. Her tail sticks out oF her skirt in back. She doesnt have shoes on and her Feet are in the water. You can see her toes on her leFt Foot. They have two very sharp claws on them

STOP

This response earns a 4 because of the overall quality of elaboration and organization. The organizational strategy is laid out in the first paragraph and is followed throughout the response as the writer meticulously describes one feature/object after another. The elaboration is effective because the writer uses layers of specific details that allow the reader to form an accurate mental image of most of the features/objects in the picture. In addition, the writer employs some unusual descriptive techniques to emphasize certain qualities of some of these features/objects; for example, the writer accentuates the "bitty" size of the waves by telling the reader that they "are not big enuf to make the raft bounse very much." The writer uses similar techniques to establish the thickness of the trees on the land and the light weight of the dog and cat on the raft. Although the response lacks a sense of completeness because it ends abruptly, the two pages of writing give every indication that the writer could have described in detail each and every feature of the picture if only there had been more paper. Therefore, the absence of a conclusion does not affect the score.

SCORE POINT 4

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

In the middle of a river, there is a raft with a cat and a dog on it. The raft is made of eight boards nailed crosswise onto three logs. One board has a nothole in it. On the front lefthand side of the raft a rope is curled into at least six big rings with the end sticking out with a knot in it. To the right of the rope is a woven picnic basket. A handle is hanging down on the right side with a lid on top. Next to the basket is a thermous jug with a top on it and a handle hanging down on the right side.

In the middle left side of the raft the spotted dog is standing. He is wearing striped shorts, dark sunglasses, and a baseball hat. He is steering the raft with a tree branch pole on the other side the cat is sitting down with her feet in the water and holding a fishing pole in both hands. He is wearing a cowboy hat, a shortsleeve shirt with wavy desines all over it, and shorts with no desines A friendly looking dinarour is folluing them. Only her wide smile and he oval shaped head and her sharklike tail are sticking out of the clam water.

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GO ON

Even though not all of the features/objects in the picture are included in this response, it is an organized, concise, well-elaborated description. The response contains no extraneous information; every sentence improves the quality of the elaboration, helping to create a vivid impression of the scene in the reader's mind. Each feature/object that the writer describes includes a number of details. Note, for example, how the sentence describing the rope layers detail upon detail: the writer precisely locates the rope on the raft (it is on the "front lefthand side"), tells how it is arranged (it is "curled into at least six big rings"), and then gives two additional pieces of information about the end of the rope (it is "sticking out" and has "a knot in it"). The entire response is evenly elaborated in this way, incorporating location, action verbs, and specific nouns and adjectives into a tightly woven visual description. In addition, the organizational strategy is clear and consistent throughout: the writer describes the raft, then the picnic items, then the dog and cat, and finally the monster.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I see an unusual cat with a hat, shirt, and shorts. The cat is fishing. Probably to cath his delicious fish dinner. There is also a dog. They are on a raft in the middle of the river. The dog looks very unusual too. The cat and the dog look kindof like people and kindof like animals. The dog looks a lot like a dalmation, but he is standing on his hind legs like a boy. He is also dressed like a boy too with sunglasses, striped shorts, and a hat with a sun vizer on it. He must be trying to get a tan because he doesn't have a shirt on. He is driving the raft by sticking a tree branch in the water and pushing it against the bottom of the river.

The cat's hat has a round rim and sits on his head behind his ears. His shirt has squiggle marks on it and a coller that is plane. He is sitting on the side of the raft and holding a fishing pole with both hands. He hasn't caut a fish yet because the pole is straight not bent. The cat is missing one foot. Maybe a shark bit it off. Ouch!

In between the dog and cat there are things for a picnic. I see a water jug and a paper sack and a picnic basket all next to each other, but I do not know what is inside them because the basket and the jug have

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

tops on them and I can't see inside the paper sack. Anyways, they are near the front of the raft. Also, next to the picnic stuff is a long rope that is wound up. It has a Knot at one end, the one that sticks out. I guess it's for tieng up the raft when they land.

I don't think they see the enormous giant water dinosaur that is swimming after them. The monster's head and long neck are sticking up out of the water but the rest of him is underneath the water except for his pointy tail. His tail sticks out of the water ever higher than his head. His head is round and flat and looks something like a pitza with pepperone eyes and nose holes. The giant enormous green gian doesn't look sad or mad. He looks happy. He has a smile that goes almost all the way around his face. Maybe he wants to play with the unusual cat and dog.

STOP

This response is a well-elaborated description of most of the picture's features. It differs from other 4 responses in that the writer's curiosity leads to speculation that does not contribute to the visual description (e.g., see passages hypothesizing about why the cat is fishing, how he lost his foot, and how the rope is used). This speculation, however, does not detract from the overall success of the response because of the quality of the elaboration that is present. Although its beginning is rather general, the response quickly becomes specific through the use of location and precise visual details. The writer, for example, notes that the "cat's hat has a round rim and sits on his head behind his ears." All of the features are elaborated to the extent that the reader has a clear sense of the picture. In addition, the response is organized throughout, concluding with a sentence that unifies the response by establishing a relationship between the dinosaur and the cat and dog.

SCORE POINT 4

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

In this picture there are 3 animals: a dog, cat, and what looks like a dinesaur. The cat with the zigzaged shirt and a long brim cap on, has a fishing pole, with a part of the string in the water. He has a grining face. The cat is also wearing black nickers. He is sitting on the edge of of the raft with one of his feet in the water. The other foot is hanging over the side too but is not in the water.

The dog is standing up on the other side of the raft, using a long stick or branch to steer the raft. The dog is wearing dark sunglases that hook over his long floppy ears. He also has a lined cap that sticks out in the front and lined shorts. It looks like he is standing up on his toes. The dog's spotted tail just seems to just hang behind him. He is looking across the water to the land that is covered with trees and bushes. There is no beach and no grassy places, only trees.

The raft that the dog and cat are on is made of eight boards nailed together and laid across three round logs. All the boards are almost exakly as long as the others and most of them look about as wide as the others except the one on the left side and it looks a

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

little bit wider. You can see the circles in the ends of the logs.

The denesaur is following the cat and dog. Only his head and tail are sticking out of the water. His nostrols are apart from each other just like his eyes. And he is bald. But he seems to relish the water. He has a great big smile that stretches from one side of his face to the other.

The water seems calm and peaceful while the raft just floats gentily on it. There are not many waves in the water and they are small. I hope they catch a lot of fish for their lunch.

This description earns a 4 by virtue of its organization, specificity, and sense of completeness. The writer employs a consistent organizational strategy, beginning with the cat and moving logically through the picture. All of the features/objects in the picture, except for the picnic items, are included in the response, and all are elaborated through precise location and specific visual details (e.g., "The dog is wearing dark sunglasses that hook over his long floppy ears"). At times the writer helps the reader to envision the scene by telling what is not there (e.g., "There is no beech and no grassy places, only trees"). The last sentence, though not descriptive in intent, effectively concludes the response.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS Grade 5 Scoring Guide for Informative / Narrative Writing

HOW TO

A friend in your class wants to make something special for your teacher. It could be a card, something to eat, or some other special present. Suggest to your friend what present he or she could make and explain how to make it. Tell what you do first. Then tell what other steps you need to take to make this special present.

SCORE POINT 0

0 = RESPONSES THAT ARE NOT SCORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE BLANK OR FAIL IN OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE TASK. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "0" CATEGORY:

- *Responses in which the student writes on an entirely different topic than the one specified.*

- *Responses in which the student makes an attempt to respond, but this attempt contains so little writing that the reader cannot discern whether the student is responding to the prompt.*

- *Responses in which the student repeats or paraphrases the prompt but does not attempt to respond to it.*

- *Responses in which the student writes entirely in a language other than English.*

- *Responses that are completely unreadable because they are illegible or incoherent.* Illegible responses are those in which the handwriting cannot be read; letters may be discernible, but they do not form recognizable words. Incoherent responses are those in which letters or words are strung together in a meaningless fashion.

- *Responses that contain nothing more than an explicit refusal to respond to the specified prompt, although the student may offer some explanation of his or her refusal.*

- *Blank papers.*

SCORE POINT 1

1 = RESPONSES THAT ARE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT DELINEATING THE STEPS/STAGES OF THE SPECIFIED PROCESS OR ACTIVITY. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "1" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that use the wrong purpose/mode; that is, they do not include the requisite components of informative/narrative writing.*** In these responses the writer does not order sequentially and/or delineate the steps/stages needed to complete a specified process or activity.

- ***Responses that are informative/narrative ("how to") but are unsuccessful in their presentation.*** Responses that attempt to address the specified process or activity but are not successful may take the following forms:

    - Responses that present a brief phrase with some indication of an attempt to attend to the task.

    - Responses that have so little writing that there are not enough steps/stages to understand the process or activity.

    - Responses that present a sequence or set of steps/stages in the process or activity but are too sparse and/or list-like to be minimally successful.

    - Responses that attend very briefly to the task but do not remain on the topic. These responses acknowledge the assignment but then switch to another topic.

- ***Responses that are poorly organized.*** In these responses the writer may present steps/stages in a random or repetitious fashion, thereby causing gaps that require the reader to infer the writer's intended thoughts, or the writer may ramble, presenting numerous details that do not contribute to an understanding of the process or activity.

- ***Responses that exhibit an overall lack of control of written language so that communication is impaired.*** The expression of the writer's thoughts is so confusing that the reader is left wondering what the writer is attempting to say.

    - At the word level there may be repeated errors in the spelling of basic words, in word choice, and/or in usage.

    - At the sentence level confusion occurs when words are not arranged in a logical order, or when there is an apparent order but the meaning is nevertheless unclear. It is inappropriate for the reader to guess at the writer's intent or to make inferences about the writer's meaning.

    - At the composition level responses lack explicit connections between ideas, and attempts at illustrations or explanations of ideas are either irrelevant or repetitious.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I AM GIVEING MY TEACHER A CARD I GO
HOME AND I WRITE DEAR MISS
BERRYHILL AND THEM I WRITE THE
REST OF THE LETTER. I GO TO
THE STORE AND BUY A CARD.
I GO TO SCHOOL AND
TURN IN ALL MY HOME-WORK
AND I DO MY LUNCH COUNT
AND I DO MY PENCILS.
I DESIGN IT AND
DECARET IT. LAST
I TAKE IT TO MY
TEACHER AND I GO
SIT DOWN IN MY
SEAT.

In this response the writer attempts to explain how to make a card. However, the steps lack sufficient detail for the response to be minimally successful. Furthermore, the steps presented are sequenced in a confusing manner, leaving the reader unsure about the order in which the steps should be performed. In addition, the writer has included extraneous information (e.g., "I go to school and turn in all my home work and I do my lunch count and I do my pencils"), which interferes with the progression of ideas in the response. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to use a more consistent organizational strategy, which could be accomplished by arranging the steps in a logical order and replacing the irrelevant information with relevant, specific details. In addition to remediation in "how-to" writing and elaboration, this student would also benefit from practice in using prewriting activities to generate and organize ideas.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

For make prensnt for tether could make scimthig to eat for tether of the wood make crad for tether and I will tell the to do gode job. For tether an so she like he prensnt and gode to eat and we have praty and evdy have gode him and tether say think you for the nice crad an I say I make it myslef and she smill.

The writer attempts to explain a process, but severe errors in spelling, usage, and sentence construction make it difficult for the reader to determine what the writer is trying to say. Because of the severity of the errors, communication is impaired. In order to gain the degree of language control necessary to write a sucessful response, this writer would need to receive continued language instruction and be given frequent opportunities to write.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

First you sheet of manilla paper. Then you Decaate your paper also color it. Also if you want you can write a poem. Then you put who it is from and who it's to. Finally you put it in a envelope and pit that person's name.

Although this response lists a few sequenced steps in the process of making a card, it gives only a bare outline of the procedure. In addition, the writer never directly states what is actually being made, leaving the reader to infer this information from the steps given. Because the information presented is so sparse, the reader is able to obtain only a vague idea of the process being explained. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to identify the process and to provide a more specific and detailed explanation of the steps in the process. This writer needs remediation in the components of "how-to" writing and in the elaboration of ideas.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I make a pencel holder for my teacher. First you fold the paper. Then you fold it in the corners. Then you get some glue or paeste. Then you glue it the Corners. Then fold it the other way. Then turn it ovor and glue were the crackes are. Then the pencel sould fit inside. If does not fit, try again. Then when fits you just make a pencel holder. Final give you teacher the pencel holder.

While this response contains a lengthy set of steps involved in making a pencil holder, the information given is vague, leaving the reader confused about the details of the procedure. For example, phrases such as "fold it in the corners" and "fold it the other way" are not specific enough to give the reader a clear understanding of how to make the pencil holder. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to clarify the process by presenting more specific information about the steps in the process. This writer would benefit from additional instruction and practice in the use of elaboration to create an effective piece of writing.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

If my teacher was lady, I would make her her favorite food. First ask her what her favorite food is. Then make sure she isn't on a diet. If her favorite food is M&M cookies, go to the store and buy a large pack of M&M's. Next turn to the back of the sack. The directions will be there. Be sure to have an adult help you make the cookies. You might want to decerat a box and put the cookies in that box. Finally bring it to school and give to your teacher.

If my teacher was a man I'd give him a nice card. Cards are always and don't cost a dime. Get a piece of paper and fold it in half. On the front put to: and your teacher's name. Open the card up and write something nice. You can write a poem or just a note. Be sure to sign your name.

There are many times to give gifts such as holidays and birthdays. It's very nice to give gifts and always fun to receive. Try giving a gift, it feels so good.

There are also many gifts to give. Cards, food, and pictures are some good gifts. Next time you think there is nothing to give, try making some of these gifts they're easy to make and great to give.

Ask your friends for some ideas of gifts to give. You may be surprised at some of the

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

answers. I asked many people and I was really suprised.

Although this response contains a good deal of specific information, the writer does not focus on a single gift. Instead, the writer presents two separate processes that are neither connected nor part of a larger process (making cards and making cookies). Because of this lack of unity, only one of the processes can be considered in scoring, and there is not enough information given on making either of these for the response to be considered minimally successful. In addition, the last three paragraphs of the response discuss gift-giving in general and therefore do not contribute to the response. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to focus on one process and give detailed information about some of the steps in that process. This writer would benefit from instruction and practice in the use of revision to ensure that each idea that is developed is relevant to the specified purpose.

SCORE POINT 1

STOP

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I suggested that I give my friend my opinion on what he should got my teaches. First I suggested that he buy her some candy. But then I said No, Ill think about it tonight and tell you tomorrow. After that I went home and I at least thought for a hour before I went to bed. Then I come up with something. I said to my self "I think he should tell him to throw a party for her. The next day of school came and I told him my ideal. He liked it, so he invited all of her friends.

Then the day came when the big party was. When I was in Science class we were going to disect a frog, and a terrible thing happened I got sick. The Next thing I knew I was home sick in my bed. It was seven thirty, that was the time the party started. I got well over night so the next day I went to school I couldn't believe my eyes or ears. Everyone was talking about the party. Even the teachers were. Then my teacher thank me for thinking it up.

It is evident that the writer saw the prompt and is attempting to respond to it because he or she mentions a gift for the teacher. However, this response does not include the requisite components of successful informative/narrative ("how-to") writing. Instead of explaining a process, the student has written a narrative about having the idea for the party and missing the party. This writer needs remediation in "how-to" writing and frequent opportunities to practice this and other types of writing.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

SCORE POINT 2

2 = RESPONSES THAT ARE MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT DELINEATING THE STEPS/STAGES OF THE SPECIFIED PROCESS OR ACTIVITY. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "2" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that present a minimally sufficient explanation of the process or activity.*** These responses may take the following forms:
    - Responses that present a lengthy sequence or set of unelaborated steps/stages in the process or activity, some of which are specific.
    - Responses that present a number of steps/stages in the process or activity, most of which are extended.
    - Responses that present a few steps/stages in the process or activity, at least one of which is somewhat elaborated.
    - Responses that present one moderately elaborated step/stage in the process or activity.
- ***Responses in which the organization may be flawed by gaps, rambling, and/or repetition.*** Although these inconsistencies may disrupt the logical progression of the response, they do not cause confusion.
- ***Responses that exhibit a limited control of written language.*** These responses may contain awkward or simple sentence structures, and word choice may be limited. In addition, the responses may include spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage errors that are likely to occur in first-draft writing.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

first take a pretty box and put your teachers name on it. Second gather up information about all the kids in the class. third gather up pichtors of the class. fourth take the information and glues the pichors to the information. fith you put the infomation in the box and rap it. Last you put pretty bows on the raped box and give it to your teacher.

This response lists a number of steps in a clear, logical sequence. Although the writer does not include a great deal of supporting detail, there is enough consistently organized specific information to make the paper minimally successful. Good use of transitional words (first, second, third, etc.) helps to guide the reader smoothly from step to step. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to include further elaboration of some of the steps in the process. For example, to the general idea of "gather[ing] up information about all the kids in the class" the writer could add the specific kinds of information that might be gathered (e.g., name, birthday, favorite hobby or school subject).

SCORE POINT 2

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

I am going to tell you how to make a present for your teacher. In this paper, I will tell you how to make a card for your teacher. This card will be for your teacher as a present.

First, get a big peace of paper about twelve to fifthteen inches long. It doesn't matter what color it is, as long as you can still rite or draw on it. Fold the paper in half.

You can rite or draw on it paper using a pen, pensil, or crayon. It is fun. I like to draw on green paper. I use a red crayon

Now fold the paper in half. Rite or draw a message for your teacher on the front of the folded paper. Know you have a card. you can rite or draw something inside the card to.

You can make the card out of any color paper and draw or rite whatever you want to tell your favorite teacher.

You can get an envelope for your card and give it to your

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

teacher as a present. It is easey and fun.

When you give your teacher the card for a present, be sure to tell her how you made it. First you get a big place of paper. Then you fold in half. Be sure to keep the cornors strait. Then you draw or rite on the front and write in with a pen,

Although this response is rather lengthy, much of it consists of repetitive information (e.g., "rite or draw" is mentioned four times and "draw or rite" an additional two times) that does not contribute to a fuller understanding of the process being explained. The first paragraph repeats the same idea ("how to make a present for your teacher") three times, and the final paragraph simply repeats previously discussed details. In addition, the response contains extraneous material (e.g., "I like to draw on green paper. I use a red crayon") which, combined with the degree of repetition, disrupts the logical progression of the response. Despite these organizational problems, the response is minimally successful because of the amount of specific information the writer included about some of the steps in the process (e.g., paragraphs two and four). To achieve a higher score, this writer would need to eliminate repetition, delete extraneous material, and provide elaboration to clarify the process further.

SCORE POINT 2

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I am going to tell how y make a paper Mashay scupture for your teacher. First make the paper Mashay. Tear up a newspaper into strips a bunch of them. Then mix up flour and water in a pan. You can use a big wood spoon. Now mix up the newspaper in the pan. It starts out Kinda hard to mix but when it gets all wet it is easy. It will be very mushy. And you will have paper Mashy. You can take the paper mashay and make a scupture and when it dry you can pante it an give it to your teacher.

In this explanation of the process of making a papier-maché sculpture, the writer devotes all except the first and last sentences of the response to the making of the papier-maché itself. This explanation is specific, detailed, and thorough. However, the writer presents only a bare outline of the remaining steps in making the sculpture. ("You can take the paper mashay and make a scupture and when it dry you can pante it an give it to your teacher"). To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to include specific details about more of the steps involved, such as suggestions for what to sculpt and/or how to paint the sculpture.

SCORE POINT 2

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

you could make a flower basket. First you will need a medium sized basket, a boquet of different Kind of flowers, some nice colored ribbon, and a piece Of stirophome. Do you have all that?" I said.

yes I've got all that stuff said Karli.

"Okay, first you get your basket and arrange your flowers in a nice arrangement, the way you think miss Benson will like... I said.

Karli said "Let me get this down on paper. Wait here while I get some paper and a pencil... Okay..... Im ready now."

Then you take your block of stirophome and put the flowers in a few at a time. Make sure you use the nice arrangement like I told you. Maybe put the prettiest flowers in the middle, or the biggest ones in the middle, and little ones around the outside.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

"Uh huh!" she said.

Next you put the stirophome into the basket and make sure it doesn't show." I continued.

"Okay," she said again,

"Finally you take your ribbon. Than you tie it to the basket in a bow." I finished.

"Okay. Thanks. Miss B. will love this," said Karli.

While this response takes the form of a narrative, it is clear that the writer understands how to explain a process in enough detail to be minimally successful. The writer begins the response by listing the needed materials, then presents a number of sequenced, specific steps explaining how to make a flower basket. Good transitions between the steps (e.g.,"First you get your basket...Then you take your block of stirophome...Next you put the stirophome into the basket...") provide the response with a logical and consistent organizational plan. While some of the narrative material is extraneous, it does not detract from an explanation of the process. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to elaborate further on some of the steps in the process.

SCORE POINT 2

STOP

SCORE POINT 3

3 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT GOOD ATTEMPTS AT DELINEATING THE STEPS/STAGES OF THE SPECIFIED PROCESS OR ACTIVITY. THE READER HAS NO DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WRITER IS ATTEMPTING TO SAY. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "3" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that present a moderately elaborated explanation of the process or activity.*** These responses may take the following forms:
    - Responses that present a lengthy sequence or set of steps/stages in the process or activity, one of which is moderately elaborated or several of which are somewhat elaborated.
    - Responses that present a number of steps/stages in the process or activity, most of which are somewhat elaborated.
    - Responses that present a few steps/stages in the process or activity, some of which are moderately elaborated.
- ***Responses that have an organizational strategy that is, for the most part, consistent, although occasional gaps, repetition, or digressions may occur.***
- ***Responses that exhibit a control of the written language, although errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage may occur in these first-draft attempts.***

If I tould my freind to make something it would be cookies.

Frist you need some dough form the store. Second you need some choclate chips. Then you need vanaley. After that you need foil so they don't stick to the boodum. Then you can check out and go home.

When you get home you get out a cokkie sheet. Next you need to put foil on the boodum of the cokkie sheet. Then you mix the choclate chips and the dough real good. After that you put two tea spunes of vanaley in and mix real weal. Then do what ever shape you want and then put on the foild cokkie sheet.

When you get finish with that. Then you put the oven on 315°. After that you put the cokie sheets in the oven. You need to weaht a few minutes then take them if there not done put them a few more minutes and take them out and there ready to eat. That is how you make choclate chip cokkies.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

This response consists of a few steps in the process of making cookies. Each of the steps is elaborated with specific detail. The writer consistently uses good transitional words and presents the steps in a clear and logical sequence (e.g., "When you get home you get out a cokkie sheet. Next you need to put foil on the boodum of the cokkie sheet"). While some minor first-draft spelling errors are present (e.g., "vanaley," "boodum," "spunes"), they do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the process. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to provide more details about some of the steps in the process.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

You could make a nice card for your teacher. First you could get a piece of white paper and fold it evenly. Second you get a pencil and some crayons. Then you open the card and draw a line across the paper near the bottom. Then draw scenes. Cut out a part of the scenes like a garage door on a house. Next cut a medium strip of paper and glue the end of it to the cut out scene. Then you cut another square from another sheet of paper. Then glue that piece of paper to the opening in the scenes. Next take the cut out piece of scenes and slip it in front of the paper that is glued. Then pull up the strap of paper and the scene will raise. Next draw something on the paper behind it. Next color the scenes. Then move the strip up and down to move the piece of the scene up and down.

This response contains a lengthy set of highly specific steps, all clearly and logically sequenced. The writer uses precise language to effectively present detailed information in a concise manner (e.g., "Next cut a medium strip of paper and glue the end of it to the cut out scene"). The response is well organized and contains no extraneous information. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to include more elaboration for some of the steps in the process. For example, to the sentence "Next draw something on the paper behind it," the writer might add a specific description of what might be drawn.

SCORE POINT 3

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

"A Special Gift"

Amber, I heard you are going to make a gift for your teacher. I have a suggestion. You could make a plague. It could say, "You are the best teacher anyone could have." You could have all kinds of designs around it. First go to a homemaking store, like Zaks, or somewhere and get a plain piece of wood that you think would look good for a plaque. Then, get some paint or splatter paint. Make a scratch copy of what it is going to look like. color it the colors you want to.

→ Then, with a pencil, very lightly, go and wright on the plaque of what you have on you scratch copy. Next, after you have drawn what you want it to look like, get your paint or splatter paint and color it in. Then, let it dry completly. After that, wrap it in some tissue paper. Next, get some wrapping paper and wrap it. Then make

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

a card to go with it. You can put whatever you want to on it. Last, give the present to your teacher!!!!

The writer uses a narrative framework only to introduce the response; therefore, this framework does not detract from the writer's explanation of the process. After setting up a conversational format in the first sentence, the writer quickly moves on to the task of describing the steps involved in making a plaque. These steps are logically sequenced and are supported with specific details (e.g., "go to a homemaking store, like Zaks," "get a plain piece of wood that you think would look good for a plaque"). To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to provide additional elaboration for some of the steps in the process.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I am going to make three paper apples. They will hang from the wall onto strings. The apples will be in order from biggest to smallest. The biggest one will hang from the shortest string. The second biggest will hang from the second littlest string. Now the smallest will hang on the biggest string.

First you need all of these materials, sissors, black marker, glue, brown and red paper, and three pieces of string this size, 1 string small, 1 string smaller, 1 string large.

Next you cut one large apple, one smallapple, and one smaller apple with the red paper. Now cut three stems with brown paper and glue them on each apple. Then take the hole punch and make a hole threw each stem and put a peice of string threw it. It realy dosen't mater what color the string is.

Last on the little apple put 1#, on the second smallest put best, and finally one the biggest one put teacher and then hang it from your wall..

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

In this response the writer presents a number of specific steps in the process of making three paper apples. The response is consistently and logically sequenced, beginning with a description of what the final result should look like (which aids the reader in understanding the process) and continuing with a list of specific materials (e.g., "black marker," "brown and red paper") and a number of clearly detailed, somewhat elaborated steps. The precision and clarity of each step (e.g., "cut three stems with brown paper and glue them on each apple"), as well as the transitions between steps, make the process easy to follow. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to provide a more thoroughly elaborated explanation of some of the steps in the process.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

SCORE POINT 4

4 = RESPONSES THAT ARE CONSISTENT, SPECIFIC, AND ELABORATED PRESENTATIONS OF THE STEPS/STAGES OF A SPECIFIED PROCESS OR ACTIVITY. THESE RESPONSES ARE ORGANIZED, UNIFIED, AND EASY TO READ. THE FEW INCONSISTENCIES THAT MAY OCCUR ARE OVERWHELMED BY THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE. THESE RESPONSES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY MOST OF THE FOLLOWING:

- ***A specific, well-elaborated sequence or set of steps/stages in a process or activity.*** The process or activity as a whole is presented in such a way that it can be understood clearly by the reader.

- ***A thorough presentation of a sequence or set of steps/stages in a process or activity.***

- ***A consistent organizational strategy.*** Although minor lapses may occur, the response has a clear sense of order and completeness. If an otherwise well-written response ends abruptly because the writer has run out of space, the paper is still eligible for a "4."

- ***Consistent control of the written language.*** Though the writer may not incorporate all of the appropriate mechanics or conventions of language, the response is particularly effective.

In addition, these responses may present some special feature that makes them particularly effective, such as:

●● Varied syntactic constructions, including compound and complex sentences.

●● Effective word choice, including apt or striking words, phrases, or expressions.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I would make my teacher a cake. First I would drive to Winn Dixie, park in the parking lot, and walk into the store. I would get a grocery cart and push it to the cake ile and pick out some items. I would get one small twelve once box of iceing, one half gallen of milk, a dozen eggs, a pound of sugar, and yeast. I would alsoget one four once package of food coloring and flavering. Then I would push the cart to the checkout counter and pay for my stuff. The other person at the counter would put my things in a paper sack, I would pick up my things and walk out to my jeep. Next I would drive home. After that I would walk to my door and open it and walk in. I would set my stuff on the kitchen table. Then I would get a large bowl and start to open my things. I would also start to mix. I would put three eggs in first and then two cups of flour. I would stir until the eggs are beated in the flour firmly. Then I would add a cup of milk and a packet of yeast. After that I would add two cups of sugar and a little salt. Then I would put a few drops of food coloring and flavoring in some water and mix it in with the rest of the stuff. Then I would bake the cake at 400 degrees about two hours. Last I would put the icing on. I could maybe make decorations for the middle of the cake. Then I will give it to my teacher the next day.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

This response contains an extremely thorough and specific explanation of the process of making a cake for the teacher. The writer describes each step, whether major or minor, in painstaking detail ("I would get a grocery cart and push it to the cake ile and...get one four once package of food coloring..."). The writer's systematic movement from step to step throughout the process makes it clear that there is a logical and consistent organizational strategy. Although the supporting details begin to thin out slightly as the paper approaches its conclusion and the writer moves more quickly from step to step, this response contains enough clearly presented and thoroughly elaborated information to earn a 4.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

One day my friend and I decaded that we would make a present for our teacher butwe didn't know what kind of present to make. Sowe thought and thought and finly we decide to make her a cake. So we went to my house and ran to the kitchen and told my mother if she would show us how to make a cake. She said sure she said the first thing you do is get out a 10-by-10 pan and grese it with butter so the cake don't stick. Then get out a mixing bowl and the flowing ingredients: 3 eggs, 1 cup of milk, 2 cups of flower, 1 1/2 Cups of sugar, half a stick of butter, and one teaspoon of salt. And please set the oven to 350°.

Put all the ingredients into the mixing bowl and stir it up until its' all mixed to gether. It will be very thick and gooey. Be sure not to have any lumps. You can brake them up with your spoom. When everything is all mixed together, scrap it into the cake pan that you already gresed with butter. "she said".

Put the cake pan in the oven for about 40 or 45 minits or until it is done. You can check with a toothpick to see if its done, if your not sure. After, your sure the cake is done, dump it out carfuly on to a plate but be sure to wait for it to cool off first. →

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Now you can put icing on the cake and spell out your teachers name with diffrent colors of icing. And take it to class she will be so suprized she will give you a A+!

In this response the writer provides a thorough, specific, well-organized explanation of how to bake a cake. The writer includes some narrative elements in this explanation, but only to establish a real-life context for learning to bake a cake. Once this context is established (i.e., one day the writer and his or her friend decide to make a cake for their teacher and ask the writer's mother to show them the process), the writer moves directly into an explanation of the process. Therefore, the narrative elements neither detract from the writer's purpose nor lessen the effectiveness of the response as a whole. Although the response contains a few minor lapses in sequencing (e.g., "dump it out carfuly on to a plate, but be sure to wait for it to cool off first") and a few first-draft spelling and usage errors (e.g., "flowing ingredients," "grese it with butter so the cake don't stick"), the writer provides a sufficiently clear and detailed explanation of the process to earn a 4.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I told my friend how to make a super lunch for the teacher. I told him this lunch would be a delishous sub, a tasty side dish, and a refreashing drink. And also desert.

First to make the sub. I told him the ingreedents are one sub roll and slice it in half. Then get some manaze and spread it on each peace of bread. Next slice four tomatos and put two slices on each sub. After that get some lettuce and put as much as you would like. Then you get your turkey and ham out of the refrigerator. Put the turkey on one side and then put the ham on the other side. Now you take the manaze again and put it on the ham and turkey. Last you fold the two pieces of bread together.

Next were going to mak a side dish. We're going to take a ½cup of pretzels and take a ½cup of sourcream and onion chips and last tak a ½cup of cheeto's. Get some seasoning in the bowl and mix everything together with a big spoon. Then pour as much as you want next to the sandwitch.

Now were going to make are drink for the teacher. First we take some tea that has some type of flavor to it. Next we'er going to take two slices of lemons, strawberries, oranges, and tangerines. With that squeeze the juice into the

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

cup. Last you put all of the slices of fruit on the edge of the cup, but make sure you leave enough room on the cup for your mouth.

Last were going to make a desert. It's going to be super rainbow icecrem sunday. First you take a scoup of pink, orange, and green shurbert and put it in the bowl. Next put hot fuge on the icecream. Then you put whipcream on the sunday. Next sprankle nuts on top of whipcream. Last put a cherry on top of everything.

After you do all that put the sub and the protzels and the drink and the sunday on a nice medal tray. Then at lunch time you can bring it in and your teacher will be so happy and surprised she will be in a good mode for the rest of the day.

Although this response explains several different processes (how to make a sub, a side dish, a drink, a dessert), they are clearly unified through the idea of a "super lunch" presented in the introduction. The details given are very specific and thoroughly elaborated. Good transitions, both between steps and between ideas within steps, provide a logical and consistent organizational strategy and help the response to read smoothly from beginning to end.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I have been asked to tell you how to make a present for your teacher. The present I would like to make would be a planetary mobile.

The materals you need for this mobile are several differant sizes of styrofoam balls, some little clear plastic things with holes in them to hang the balls with, some string, and several coat hangers. You also will need differant colors of markers to color the stirofoam balls with.

First, find the biggest ball and color it yellow or orange. This will be the sun.

Second, find four little balls. These will be Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars. Color Mercury yellow and Mars red. Leave Venus white. Color the Earth blue and green and try to draw the continents on it.

Third, find four big balls, but not as big as you used for the sun. These will be Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Put differant color strips on Jupiter and a big red spot which is a giant storm three times bigger than the hole Earth. Put blue and brown and red strips on Saturn and green strips on Uranus and Neptune. Finally, pick out another small ball for Pluto, and color it black or brown.

Making rings for Saturn is sort of hard. You have to cut out a piece of cardbord in a circle and draw rings inside it. The

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

put toothpicks sticking out around the middle of Saturn. Now place the cardbord ring over the top of Saturn and glue it to the toothpicks. Its hard to get the ring on so it doesn't droop.

Now stick the little plastic things in the top of the balls where you want the top of the planet to be. Put string through the little holes. Next, get your dad or somebody to cut the coat hangers apart and bend them so they stick out like spoaks on a wheel. Hang the sun in the middle and the planets in the order they go from the sun. Then take it to school and suprise your teacher with the planetary mobile.

The writer presents a well-elaborated delineation of the specific steps involved in making a planetary mobile. The writer's effective use of language to provide specific detail (e.g., "Put differant color strips on Jupiter and a big red spot which is a giant storm three times bigger than the hole Earth") and his or her use of a highly consistent organizational strategy provide the reader with enough clear and specific information to replicate the process. The response as a whole conveys a sense of order and completeness.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS Grade 5 Scoring Guide for Expressive / Narrative Writing

NARRATIVE

Pretend that you are walking outside, and you see a sparkling pink stone. As you reach to touch it, the stone changes color. Write a story about what happens next.

SCORE POINT 0

0 = RESPONSES THAT ARE NOT SCORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE BLANK OR FAIL IN OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE TASK. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "0" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses in which the student writes on an entirely different topic than the one specified.***
- ***Responses in which the student makes an attempt to respond, but this attempt contains so little writing that the reader cannot discern whether the student is responding to the prompt.***
- ***Responses in which the student repeats or paraphrases the prompt but does not attempt to respond to it.***
- ***Responses in which the student merely retells a known fairy tale or rhyme.***
- ***Responses in which the student writes entirely in a language other than English.***
- ***Responses that are completely unreadable because they are illegible or incoherent.*** Illegible responses are those in which the handwriting cannot be read; letters may be discernible, but they do not form recognizable words. Incoherent responses are those in which letters or words are strung together in a meaningless fashion.
- ***Responses that contain nothing more than an explicit refusal to respond to the specified prompt, although the student may offer some explanation of his or her refusal.***
- ***Blank papers.***

SCORE POINT 1

1 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO TELL A STORY. THE FOLLOWING KINDS OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "1" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that use the wrong purpose/mode; i.e., they do not include the requisite components of expressive/narrative writing.*** Some of these responses may contain events, but the events are not sequenced. Other responses may be merely informative or descriptive.

- ***Responses that are expressive/narrative but are unsuccessful in their presentation.*** Responses that attempt to address the task but are not successful may take the following forms:

    - Responses that contain a brief phrase with some indication of an attempt to attend to the task.

    - Responses that have so little writing that there are not enough details to sequence.

    - Responses that contain a sequence of events, but the sequence is not sustained sufficiently to be minimally successful.

    - Responses that attend very briefly to the task but do not remain on the topic. These responses acknowledge the assignment and then switch to another topic.

- ***Responses that are poorly organized or contain major gaps.*** In these responses the writer may present events in a random or repetitive fashion, thereby causing gaps that require the reader to infer the writer's intended thoughts; or the writer may ramble, presenting numerous details that do not contribute to the story line.

- ***Responses that exhibit an overall lack of control of written language so that communication is impaired.*** The expression of the writer's thoughts is so confusing that the reader is left wondering what the writer is attempting to say.

    - At the word level there may be repeated errors in the spelling of basic words, in word choice, and/or in usage.

    - At the sentence level confusion occurs when words are not arranged in a logical order, or when there is an apparent order but the meaning is nevertheless unclear. It is inappropriate for the reader to guess at the writer's intent or to make inferences about the writer's meaning.

    - At the composition level responses lack explicit connections between ideas, and attempts at illustrations of ideas are either irrelevant or repetitious.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

One day when I went to the park I saw a sparkling pink stone. I picked it up and it changed color. The stone made me feel strange. Then I felt very strong and I pushed a car whith a finger. I felt like I was a very strong man like He-man, too and so I picked up a tracktor. I was happy with that sparkling stone and strong too.

This writer does present a sequence of events, but the plot line is not sufficiently developed to be minimally successful. The first three sentences of the response are simply a restatement of the information presented in the prompt. The only addition the writer makes to this restatement is to add that the stone made the narrator feel strong and to elaborate on that idea by giving two examples of that strength. In order to achieve a higher score, the writer would need to develop the narrative further by including more events that are logically related to the story line and by elaborating on those events, providing specific details about them. This writer would benefit from additional practice in writing narratives and from instruction in the use of prewriting activities to plan and develop a story.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

A stone that is valalul

One day me and my dig sistr when to ploe I told my Sister if she Knod pak gem wif me and she sed yes teen I pik up a ston and teen ween I tren it over in my had and it saw a 14 car gold rock teen I put the rok in poket I desaper in to a mark plan ter was no de door teen a gect was calbin teen I jeipe in the and I was loe in the erth teen the rok desaper teen we teen here.

It is clear that this writer saw the prompt and attempted to write a narrative response. However, the response is not minimally successful because the student's lack of language control is severe enough to impair communication. Confused syntax, missing words, and extensive misspellings of basic words make the response difficult to decipher. The writer needs continued language instruction and frequent opportunities to write in order to develop greater language control and fluency.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

One day we were going to the rodeo and I saw a funny looking stone on the ground. I pick it upand hold it in my hand. It started to change another color I was thinking that I was trying to tell somebody to tell me if the stone was weerd because it was changing color I was trying to take it out of my hands but it was stuck. I tell my mom if she can take it out. And it changed color. And I was thinking that was weerd and it was stuck and that was weerd. that was one crazy stone I'll tell you. And I telling someone if it stuck and changing color and being weerd and crazy and all like that.

This response is unsuccessful because the story line is difficult to follow and because very little in the response contributes to the story line. Some of the sentences are difficult to follow (e.g., "I was thinking that I was trying to tell somebody to tell me if the stone was weerd because it was changing color"), indicating that the student may have some language control problems. Other sentences simply do not move the story forward. For example, the writer repeats the same ideas several times (e.g., that the stone was "weerd," that it changed colors, and that it was stuck in the narrator's hand), which adds nothing to the story line and actually disrupts the logical progression of the story. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to express each idea more clearly and to replace the unnecessary repetition with additional elaborated events that move the story forward. This writer would benefit from instruction in how to use the writing process to create an effective narrative piece and from frequent writing practice in order to develop greater fluency.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

One day when I went with my friends to the playground. I saw some stones on the ground. I got a sparkling pink one and called it my lucky stone. When I got to school I was doing very good on my work. I was feeling very happy with my lucky stone in my class. I was geting so much good grades and I can work so much hard. I could fly in all the school. I could fly with birds in the sky. I could run very fast like a car. I can also jumps like a deer. that lucky stone make me do things that I could not do.

This writer begins effectively, explaining in detail how the narrator found the stone. However, at the point in the story where the narrator arrives at school, the writer drops the narrative thread, listing in seemingly random fashion the capabilities that the lucky stone produced (e.g., "I could fly with birds in the sky"). After listing several of these capabilities, the writer abruptly ends the story. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to develop the story line by presenting a sequence of events that move through time and by elaborating on some of those events through the use of specific detail. This writer needs additional instruction in the components of narrative writing and frequent opportunities to write narratives.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

The Tale of The Sparkling Pink Stone

Once upon a time I was exploring in an old cave. Suddenly I found a very sparkling pink stone. I took it home and showed my mom. She said it was very pretty. Then I put it in my rock collekshun.

The stone is small, about the size of a nickle and it is flat and shiny and has some silver color mixed in with the pink. I think the silver is what makes it sparkle, specially when you put in the sun. It isn't very heavy at all and it is sorta rough all over. It looks somthing like micca and you can see it is made of thin layers one on top of the other on top of the other. And you can probably peal off the layers but I don't want to becaus I won't have any rock left.

I put my new rock beside a rock that is dark gray almost black. And that's the story about the sparkling pink rock.

This response fails to be minimally successful because the primary focus of the response is a description of the properties of the pink stone rather than a narrative based on the prompt. It is clear that the writer understands the concept of elaboration, but he or she has used it to describe rather than to tell a story. Although the description is set in a narrative frame--that is, the response begins and ends in a narrative mode--the narrative components that are present do not constitute a sustained plot. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to write a narrative piece rather than a descriptive piece. This writer needs further instruction in the differences between descriptive and narrative writing as well as additional practice in both types of writing.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

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SCORE POINT 2

2 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO TELL A STORY. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "2" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that contain a bare, controlled, linked sequence of events.***

- ***Responses that contain a somewhat elaborated sequence of events.***

- ***Responses in which organization is apparent, although gaps or rambling may occur.*** In some responses narrative clusters may be evident; however, gaps occur between the clusters. In other responses rambling may occur but does not cause confusion.

- ***Responses that exhibit a limited control of written language.*** These responses may contain awkward or simplistic sentence structures and word choice may be limited. In addition, they may include spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage errors that are likely to occur in first-draft writing.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

"The Amazing Pink Stone"

Have you ever found an unusal stone
on the groundand picked it up
and felt something crazy was
happening inside you? Well I have
but it was so hard to beleave. This
is what happen to me. Well I
touched this sparkling pink stone
and it changed to ornge. I picked
it up and started feeling funny.
Then when I past the Barber Shop
I looked up and said, My what
a nice bird that is, I like birds
a lot. My sister Lelie and I put
up a bird feeder in our back
yard so we can get the birds
to come eat and we can watch
them. We get all kinds of birds.
Anyways, I said what a nice
bird that was and then I
terned into the bird. While I
was flying in the air I past
the forest and said. Wow!
look! at that bear. Then I terned
into the bear.

When I was walking in the
woods I said look there are some
hunters. I don't like hunters do

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you? They shoot their guns and
Scare away all the pretty birds
and animals. And I don't
like that noise either. Anyways
I turned into a hunter. Now I
was geting mad. I tryed to
throw away the stone but I
couldn't. So I wished that I
was my normal self and I
never wished to be an animal
again.

This response presents a narrative sequence with sufficient plot development to be minimally successful. The writer understands how to move a plot forward through time and adds specific information to some of the events in the narrative sequence (e.g., "Then when I past the Barber Shop I looked up and said, My what a nice bird that is"). However, much of the writing is extraneous information that does not contribute to the story line. For example, the writer digresses twice from the story--once to discuss his or her bird feeder and a second time to talk about hunters. Once these digressions are removed, what remains is a minimally elaborated, linked sequence of events. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to eliminate the material that does not contribute to the narrative and to develop the story more completely either by elaborating further on the events currently in the story or by adding other elaborated events that are logically related to the story line. This writer might benefit from opportunities to practice using prewriting activities to plan a narrative and using revision to eliminate material that does not contribute to the effectiveness of a piece of writing.

SCORE POINT 2

STOP

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

When I picked up that stone it kept on sparkling but it changed color. It turned bright red. It had special powers. It made me feel like I was getting ready to go into outer spad. Right before I could do anything I all sudden blasted off into outter spad. Spacl was a neat plac to be. There were falling stars and there were astrods. One time I almost hit my head on an astrod. And another time I almost burnt myself on a falling star. I was only there for one earth hour but one space week. On Saturday I was going back to earth very fast. When I landed luckily I landed on my feet. I was just on time for supper. I told my mom where I went. That was no use. She don't even belive me.

This response presents a narrative sequence with sufficient plot development and elaboration to be minimally successful. The response does not receive a higher score because the events in the second part of the story are not sufficiently developed. In the first part of the response, the writer uses elaboration effectively, giving specific examples to explain the idea that "Space was a neat place to be." However, once that idea has been established, the writer ends the story very rapidly, mentioning a few events briefly without elaborating on them. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to provide additional specific information about the events mentioned in the story and/or include additional elaborated events that are meaningfully related to the story line.

SCORE POINT 2

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

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Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

When I pickt up that stone funny things started to happen. I started to grow and grow into a jiant. I was the bigest one in the hole world. I didn't know what to do. I went to my house. I couldn't get in the house. My mom got scared and called the polise. They sent airplanes And the army too. They started to shoot and shoot and they started to shoot bombs. So I run away. And it started to be wenter and I was cold and it started to snow and I begen to shrink and shrink. I was small again. I was soo happy. And I went home and threw that stone away. Then I gave my mom a big hug.

This response contains a narrative sequence with a plot sufficiently sustained to be minimally successful. It presents a logically connected sequence of events, each of which moves the story forward. The response does not receive a higher score because each event is only minimally elaborated and because there are gaps in which the writer juxtaposes events without explaining the connection between them. For example, there is a gap between "it started to snow" and "I begen to shrink and shrink." Although there seems to be some kind of connection between those two ideas, the writer does not provide the necessary information to establish this connection. In order to achieve a higher score, the writer would need to develop the events in the narrative by including additional specific information about each one and to provide the information necessary to eliminate the gaps in the story line. This writer would benefit from instruction and practice in the use of elaboration to enhance a narrative sequence and to establish connections between ideas.

SCORE POINT 2

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

Sparkling Pink Stone

The stone turns and sparkles like a dimond in the sky. I see something strange in the stone. It looks like a princess made out of crystals that sparkle like the sun. "The Princess said Come to me my child." I was verey scard but she seemed like a nice person. When she spoke it seemed like I was ridding three the sky on Unikorns. The womans name was Princess of all the Cristals of the earth. She took me to her castle when she locked me in a ice chamber. It was cold in theis. Then I remembered my friend Fire I asked him to burn the ice castle down but the Princess iced his soal. I thout I wasent going to maket. When all of a sudden I felt warmth it was his wife Fire 2 she was going to cooke the ice castle to a giant puddle. The war over betwin the princess and I so we got the wind from the prinsess and pointed it to Fire After an hour or two his soul turned

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into fireagain. All of us were happy exept for the princess.

This response approaches the quality of a "3" response because of its sustained plot and its use of elaboration. The narrative has a plot that moves forward through time, and the writer uses vivid word choice and imagery (e.g., "...sparkles like a dimond in the sky" and "...cooke the ice castle to a giant puddle") to help the reader clearly visualize some of the events included in the story line. However, other events are not elaborated at all, and the second half of the story contains a number of gaps that make the story line difficult to follow. In the second half, the writer jumps from event to event without providing the information that the reader needs to understand the sequence of events. For example, the writer does not explain where "Fire" and "Fire 2" came from or why the war with the Princess ended. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to guide the reader more smoothly through the last half of the response by providing additional information in order to fill in the gaps and allow the reader to understand each event in the story. This writer would benefit from additional instruction and practice in the use of elaboration to make connections among ideas clearer.

SCORE POINT 2

STOP

SCORE POINT 3

3 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT GOOD ATTEMPTS TO TELL A STORY. THE READER HAS NO DIFFICULTY FOLLOWING THE STORY LINE. THE ELABORATION CONTAINED IN THESE RESPONSES IS CONTROLLED, ADDING SUBSTANCE TO THE STORY LINE. THESE RESPONSES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY THE FOLLOWING:

- ***Responses that present a moderately elaborated sequence of events.***
- ***Responses that have an organizational strategy that is, for the most part, consistent, although occasional gaps, repetitions, or digressions may occur.***
- ***Responses that exhibit a control of the written language, although errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage may occur in these first-draft attempts.***

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

One day my dog Bonita and me went out back to play. Bonita started digging up a bone and when she did up came a sparkling pink stone. It was butiful. I was so happy. I yelled to my father to come look. When he came I reached down To pick up the stone and it started to change color. I held on to it and it changed from pink to blue and then to green. I said to my father look at the stone it is sparkling and changing into all different colors and my father said throw it I said "no" I am not going to throw it! He said why and I said becouse it can wich me luck and my father said o.k. then you can cepe it I said thank you. Then when we went inside I went to my room and and it was bed time so I went to sleep. Then in the morning I had to go to take a test in school and so. I put the sparkling stone That was now purple in my bakpak. When I was in School my friends said they didnt want to take the test I said I didnt mind. My teacher asked if I was ready for the test I said maybe. I like my teacher she has kurly red hair and sometimes she reads stories to us. When I went to take the test I got a 100 I told my

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friends they said did you study? I said no. And they said then why did you have a 100 because this stone is so lucky and I showed to them but it didnt glow or change color or anything and they did not lisen I said well to bad they got a 50. So I went home I told my father my father said then that stone is speshul I said yes I know, and we lived happly ever after.

Although this response is not as fluent as some other "3" responses, it achieves a score of 3 by virtue of the level of elaboration it contains and its unified story line. Much of the elaboration in this response consists of dialogue, which is used to move the plot forward. It is clear that the writer had a plan guiding the forward movement of the story line. However, the response does contain some minor organizational flaws. For example, the writer digresses briefly to talk about a teacher ("I like my teacher she has kurly red hair and sometimes she reads stories to us"), which detracts from the overall effectiveness of the narrative. To achieve a 4, this writer would need to elaborate more fully on the events included in the narrative and/or add additional episodes to the story line. The piece would also be more effective if the writer had more consistent control of the written language. Note that the absence of quotation marks as dialogue markers is common in first-draft writing at this age and does not affect the writer's score.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

I stared and stared into the sparkling pink stone. I couldn't stop. Then I felt strong and wanted to do something good. When I trided to run home and tell my mom about it I started to fly. Then when I got home I tried to push they door open I accidently pushed it down. When I told my mom she didn't beleive me. So I went out of the house to pet my dog and when I tried to pat his back I almost broke his back bone. So I went in the house again to play my Nintedo I was doing good then when I tried to press the button my thumb went right through the controler. Then I said "That's it I'm getting rid of this stupik stone" So I flow back to the woods where I founded it and I threw the stone way far into the trees untill I could not see it any more. Then I tried to fly and I didn't So I ran home and now I will neve ever forget that horrible day.

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This response earns a score of 3 by presenting a moderately elaborated, tightly controlled sequence of events unified by the theme of the problems the narrator has with his or her new-found strength. The writer elaborates effectively by providing specific, detailed examples of the effects of this strength (e.g., "...when I tried to press the button my thumb went right through the controler"). The story is easy to follow and is consistently developed from beginning to end, and the writer resolves the action rather than ending abruptly. To achieve a 4, this writer would need to develop the story more fully either by elaborating more completely on the events in the sequence or by including additional elaborated events.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

A long time ago a boy named Hank was riding his bicycle. Then on the side of the road he saw something shiny. He stopped his bicycle and leaned it up against a tree and went to see what the shiny thing was. When he got closer to it he could he could tell that it was a pink stone and it was sparkling. He was very cureous. Slowly slowly he got closer and closer.

Then I bent over to touch it and when I did Poof it changed from pink to purple! I was so surprised I jumped backwards and tripped over a sticky bush and fell down on some thorns. But I just got up and went back to look at the stone. This time I sneck up on it. And there it was pink again. So I bent over to pick it up and wow it turned purple again. But I didn't jump back. I stood up strait and pretended not to pay attention to it. Then quicklike I looked at it and it was pink again. I was getting flustated. So I reached for it again and it changed to purple again. I bravely picked it up and looked at it and the sun shined on it. Then I figured it out. My shadow was making it look like it was changing colors. Another mystry solved. I put the stone in my bicycle bag and went home.

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This response represents a moderately successful attempt at telling a story. It progresses in a controlled, organized manner with no confusing gaps, sudden transitions, or extraneous information. Most of the events in the sequence have been elaborated through the inclusion of specific details (e.g., "Then I bent over to touch it and when I did Poof it changed from pink to purple"). The writer makes good use of action verbs (e.g., "leaned," "tripped"), and of specific adjectives and adverbs (e.g., "cureous," "backwards") to help the reader visualize what happened when Hank discovered the stone. In addition, rather than ending the narrative abruptly, the reader brings the action to a logical conclusion. Note that the shift in point of view from third person to first person between the first and second paragraphs does not affect the response's score, since this kind of shift is often seen in first-draft writing of young writers. To achieve a 4, the writer would need to develop the plot more completely by elaborating more fully upon the existing events and/or introducing additional moderately elaborated events.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

On my way to my friend Ronnies house I saw a pink stone on the ground. When I picked it up it changed to a blue color and it sparkled. As I stared at it I started to feel funny. A cuple of minutes latter I fell down to the floor in a split posision and I slept for a million years when I woke up every thing changed. Mom was an old lady. Dad was an old man too, but he had a beard about 200 feet long. I was so surpried this couldn't be how long I slept I said aloud. Wait a minute I'm going to sleep again. Then I slept for another million years. A after a million years passed I woke up again. Mom was a little girl and dad was a little boy. I was still holding the stone, but it had changed from blue to yellow. Then I slept for a another million years. After that I woke up to my normal life again. I said "Wait a minute its the stone that is making me think of flashbacks." I threw it into the sewer. When I got home my mom was standing infront of the house, she said, "Dear what are you doing? You asked me if you could go to Ronnies house but I didn't think you would stay past dinner time." You see mom its a long story. Before I got to Ronnies house I found a weird stone that took me to the future and then past and back to the prsent. Don't you belive me mom? Sure, I believe you. I will never ever pick up a strange stone unless I know what kind it is.

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GO ON

This response represents a good attempt at telling a story. It demonstrates a consistent organizational strategy and is moderately elaborated. Each episode in the story is logically connected to other episodes in the sequence and is elaborated either with dialogue or with specific, descriptive details (e.g., "...he had a beard about 200 feet long"). This response is unusual in that the time span covers millions of years. Nevertheless, the writer manages to control this movement through time by the effective use of transitions (e.g., "After a million years passed..." and "When I got home..."). A weakness in the story is the minimal elaboration of the various episodes in the narrator's travels. This writer could achieve a 4 by elaborating more fully upon these episodes, providing more detailed information on what the narrator found at each point in time.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

SCORE POINT 4

4 = RESPONSES THAT ARE CONSISTENT, ORGANIZED, AND ELABORATED NARRATIVES. THESE RESPONSES ARE UNIFIED AND EASY TO READ. THE FEW INCONSISTENCIES THAT MAY OCCUR ARE OVERWHELMED BY THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE. THESE RESPONSES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY THE FOLLOWING:

- ***A controlled, well-elaborated sequence of events.*** The response follows the narrative progression from beginning to end. The writer does not make abrupt shifts in time or location. When shifts in time or location occur, the writer handles these in a clear, effective manner.

- ***Narratives that have a clear sense of beginning and ending.*** The writer does not stop writing abruptly but brings closure to the writing by resolving the action. Occasionally a writer begins to tell a story and then runs out of paper before bringing the story to an effective conclusion. If an otherwise well-written story ends abruptly because the writer has run out of space, the paper is still eligible for a "4."

- ***Consistent control of the written language.*** Though the writer may not incorporate all of the appropriate mechanics or conventions of language, the response is particularly effective.

In addition, these responses may present some special feature that makes them particularly effective, such as:

  - Varied syntactic constructions, including compound and complex sentences.
  - Effective word choice, including apt or striking words, phrases, or expressions.

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

It was a hot day in May. I wanted to cool off so I called my friend Tiffany on the telephone and asked her if she wanted to ride bikes to Mr. Grant's swimming hole and go swimming for a little while. We both asked our mothers if we could go and they said yes. So I put on my bathing suit under my clothes and packed some picnic food to take withus. Then I got on my bike and rode to Tiffany's apartment and she was all ready to go.

It didn't take long to get to Mr. Grant's swimming hole because it was Saturday. There weren't many cars on the road to have to watch out for. When we got there we saw a whole lot of our friends swimming. We saw Joey and Britt and Dawn and Sandy and even some people we didn't know. We took off our clothes except for our bathing suits and started to get in the water.

That's when I looked over to the edge of the hole to where a big oak tree was. Under the oak tree there was something sparkling. I said, "Tiffany, you go ahead in the water. I want to see something over under that tree." I walked to the tree. When I got closer I could see that what was sparkling was a pink stone that was round like a ball. I went closer and bent over to touch it. All of the

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

suden it changed color.

I turned and yelled to Tiffany, "Tiffany, come here quick!" She couldn't hear me because the kids were playing around and making lots of noise. So I had to go in the water and swim to where she was. The water was cold when I got in but I got used to it fast. When I got to Tiffany I put my hands to her ear and yelled through them, "Come with me to see something strange under the oak tree." But she didn't want to. She wanted to keep on playing a game with everybody else because it was her turn to be "it". I tried to get other kids to go look at the sparkling stone but they were all having too much fun playing in the water.

So I got out of the water and sat on the ground and tried not to cry. I wanted someone to see the stone with me. Then I got up and walked back to the oak tree all by myseelf. I wanted to see if it would change color again. When I got to the tree I couldn't see the stone. I looked all over for it but couldn't find it. And I still don't know what happened to that strange stone.

This response is a consistently controlled, well-elaborated narrative. It is clear that the writer has an organizational strategy, and he or she moves systematically from one event to the next. Although the word choice is not as vivid as in some other "4" responses, the response earns a score of 4 by virtue of its thoroughness and specificity. Every event is presented in great detail so that the reader has no doubt as to what happened.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

One day I was walking along the road and I saw something sparkling on the sidewalk. At first I thought it was a quarter, but when I got closer I could tell it was only a stone. I was mad but I picked it up anyway. Then the stone got bigger and changed color. All of a sudden a genie appered. He said, "I am a genie from Babalonia. That stone will let you have great powers and you can have want and all you have to do is ask it." Then he disappered right then and there. I thought wow this is something I have been waiting for for ten years. So I asked the stone for fifty cents to by an ice cream cone. It sparkled and changed color and the next thing I knew I had fifty cents in my sweaty hand. I couldn't believe it. I would have asked it for ten million dollas but I couldn't walk around with that kind of money. So I went home to show it to my mom. And I asked the stone for ten million dollars and there in front of my mom was ten million dollars. She couldn't believe it either. When

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

my father came home and I showed the stone to him. At first he didn't believe me and then I Esaly asked the stone for a big trampoline and there in the backyard was a trampoline. My father almost shot up to space from his chair. I rolled on the living room floor laughing. My family and I lived on the money and luxuiry of the sparkling stone for ten years. One day I was asking the stone for something and the genie apperd and said, "You have lived of the stone's money and luxiory for ten years and now is the time to give it back so I can give it to another greatful child." So he snatched the stone from my hand and I asked, "How am I going to live?" He said "Esaly your already the richest man in the world." He left and I have never seen the genie from Barbaloyria or his sparkling pink stone either that I carried so proudly.

This narrative is organized, well elaborated, and consistently in control of the written language. The story line is easy to follow and is consistently developed from beginning to end. The events are sequenced logically through time and are elaborated with additional specific details that allow the reader to form a vivid impression of the events included in the plot (e.g., "My father almost shot up to space from his chair. I rolled on the living room floor laughing"). The writer also uses dialogue effectively to move the plot forward (e.g., "...I am a genie from Babaloynia. That stone will let you have great powers and you can have want and all you have to do is ask it"). Although a time span of ten years is covered, the writer clearly marks the transition between the original events and those of ten years later ("My family and I lived on the money and luzuiry of the sparkling stone for ten years. One day...").

SCORE POINT 4

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

After I held the stone for awhile my hand started shakeing and my fingers started tingeling. Then suddenly a little worm popped out of a soft spot in the center of the stone. I stood there, frozen with shock. "Hello young man. What's your name?" he said in a friendly voice. Still shocked, I said, "M-m-my name's Jose." "You look startled. Are you scared of me?" "Of course not. I'm just shocked," I said. The little worm hopped upon my arm. Then he began to pull tiny bits of food from his pockets in his jacket. "I've been waiting to get out of that stone for years. Oh, before I forget, I can grant you three wishes. But first, you must get me some more food," he said. So, I put the little worm inside my pocket and started off for home. It was misting outside and I lived two blocks away. I had to hurry. When I got home I headed strait for the refrigerator. I pulled out cheese, meat and mustard. Then I went over to the cabnet and got a loaf of bread. "I'm going to make you a mini sandwich," I said with excitement. I finally finished the sandwich and gave it to him. "Can I have my wishes now?" I said anxiously. "I was joking along" he said. "Why you! I grabed the worm and shoved him back into the stone's soft center. "Goodbye you cheating worm" I said. Then I threw the stone into the trash.

This response is tightly focused and evenly elaborated across the response. Despite being quick, the pace is steady and logically sequenced. The response also has a clear sense of beginning and ending. Although the story line does not include many events and does not cover a wide span of time, each event is presented in great detail (e.g., "After I held the stone for awhile my hand started shaking and my fingers started tingeling. Then suddenly a little worm popped out of a soft spot in the center of the stone"), and everything in the story moves it forward to a logical conclusion. It is clear that the writer had an overall plan and followed that plan throughout the response. In addition, the writer demonstrates highly effective word choice (e.g., "startled," "frozen with shock") and effective use of dialogue.

PAGE

SCORE POINT 4

GO ON

N-17

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

One day in early September my big sis, Heather took me to an early September fair. I had been begging her to take me for a wek. The fair had been in town only two weeks and this was the last day it was to be in town!

When we arrived you could hear kids screaming at their mothers to let them have one more ticket. You could smell the sweet aroma of carmel apples fresh with nuts. But then something caught my eye.. it was a bright, sparkling pink stone on the ground. All around it were smaller stones with all the colors of the rainbow. I raced toward them.

When I had reached it, I just stood in ah. My cheeks glow from the cold wind that whipped around my face. I slowly bent over to pick up that beautiful stone, trying to savor every moment. The stone sparkled proudly as my hand wrapped around it... What is this! It isn't a lovely, glimmering pink stone--- it has changed into a dull, ugly green blob. What a bummer. I sighed with displeasure and put it in my pocket and walked back to where Heather was buying tickets for all the rides. She finally realized I was there. She glanced at me and said, "So where's that gorgious stone?" I gave a sigh and said, "It just turned into an ugly green stone." She gave me a smirk and started to walk off but turned and said "Tuff luck kid, meet me at the ferris wheel in an hour, we'll go home then." She walked off leaving me in the

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

cold alone.

Suddenly the stone started to move around in my pocket then poof! I was gone. I was in a different place. It was surrounded with fruit trees and a big lake of sparkling diamonds and rubies and safires. I spent the whole day in this wonderful place not thinking of anything else but that I was injoying myself. I never returned to that fair and I never returned home but to this day I carry that beatiful-ugly stone.

The End

This response is unified and easy to follow and has a clear sense of beginning and ending. The events in the first three paragraphs are thoroughly and effectively elaborated with specific, vivid details and images. The writer is especially adept at bringing the reader into the scene through the use of precise sensory words (e.g., "You could smell the sweet aroma of carmel apples frosh with nuts"). One weakness in this response is the unevenness of the elaboration. After describing in detail the events surrounding the discovery of the stone, the writer hurries to a conclusion, telling very little about an entire day spent in the "wonderful place" that the narrator visits. However, the strength of the first three paragraphs outweighs this flaw. In addition, although the ending does arrive quickly, it is logically connected to the rest of the story. Despite the uneven quality of the elaboration in this response, its overall effectiveness earns it a score of 4.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS Grade 5 Scoring Guide for Informative / Classificatory Writing

CLASSIFICATORY

There are both good and bad things about watching television. Write a composition for your teacher in which you explain both what is good and what is bad about watching television.

SCORE POINT 0

0 = RESPONSES THAT ARE NOT SCORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE BLANK OR FAIL IN OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE TASK. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "0" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses in which the student writes on an entirely different topic than the one specified.***
- ***Responses in which the student makes an attempt to respond, but this attempt contains so little writing that the reader cannot discern whether the student is responding to the prompt.***
- ***Responses in which the student repeats or paraphrases the prompt but does not attempt to respond to it.***
- ***Responses in which the student writes entirely in a language other than English.***
- ***Responses that are completely unreadable because they are illegible or incoherent.*** Illegible responses are those in which the handwriting cannot be read; letters may be discernible, but they do not form recognizable words. Incoherent responses are those in which letters or words are strung together in a meaningless fashion.
- ***Responses that contain nothing more than an explicit refusal to respond to the specified prompt, although the student may offer some explanation of his or her refusal.***
- ***Blank papers.***

SCORE POINT 1

1 = RESPONSES THAT ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS THE TOPIC BUT ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "1" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that use the wrong purpose/mode; i.e., they do not include the requisite components of informative/classificatory writing.*** In these responses the writer does not present what is good and/or what is bad about the specified topic.

- ***Responses that are informative/classificatory but are unsuccessful in their presentation.*** Responses that attempt to address the task but are not successful may take the following forms:

    - Responses that present a list of words or brief phrases with some indication of an attempt to attend to the task.

    - Responses that address the topic in a skeletal way. These responses may present one or more ideas, and there may even be a little elaboration of these ideas, but the information and explanation may be vague, unclear, or not sustained sufficiently to be minimally successful.

    - Responses in which the reader must infer the relationship between the information presented and the point that the information is intended to clarify.

    - Responses that attend very briefly to the task but do not remain on the topic. These responses acknowledge the assignment but then switch to another topic.

- ***Responses that are poorly organized.*** The writer may present ideas in a random or repetitious fashion, thereby causing gaps that require the reader to infer the writer's intended thoughts; or the writer may ramble, presenting numerous details that do not contribute to the reader's understanding of what the writer is attempting to say.

- ***Responses that exhibit an overall lack of control of written language so that communication is impaired.*** The expression of the writer's thoughts is so confusing that the reader is left wondering what the writer is attempting to say.

    - At the word level there may be repeated errors in the spelling of basic words, in word choice, and/or in usage.

    - At the sentence level confusion occurs when words are not arranged in a logical order, or when there is an apparent order but the meaning is nevertheless unclear. It is inappropriate for the reader to guess at the writer's intent or to make inferences about the writer's meaning.

    - At the composition level responses lack explicit connections between ideas, and attempts at illustrations or explanations of ideas are either irrelevant or repetitious.

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

The Good and the bad about TV.

TV has good and bad things about it. family Ties is good it is funny. Another good thing is A Diffrent World. its even funner than family Ties. But there are bad things too. Like the Bos. My Brother likes it but its stupid. Once my Brother thew popcorn and my mom got real mad cause it was all over the flor and he had to clen it up. That was last week. And another thing thats bad is your Mom might not Let you watch it when you want to.

This writer attempted to discuss the good and bad things about watching television but was unsuccessful for two reasons. First, the response is too sparse and list-like to receive a higher score--that is, the writer merely lists a few rather general advantages and disadvantages of watching television without elaborating on any of these ideas. For example, the writer states that "family Ties is good it is funny" and then goes on to the next idea rather than stopping to provide specific information that would explain what is "good" and "funny" about the show. Second, the response includes extraneous information that is not relevant to the classificatory task specified by the prompt. For example, the anecdote about an incident in which the writer's brother "thew popcorn" provides no information about either the good or the bad things about watching television. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to both eliminate the irrelevant ideas and develop the relevant ideas, including enough specific details to give the reader a clear understanding of the writer's point of view. This writer would benefit from additional instruction and practice in how to write a sustained classificatory piece, as well as in how to use elaboration to develop ideas more completely. Practice using revision in order to decide which ideas need further development and which ideas should be eliminated may also be helpful.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I am omast going tosay wat are the good things about t.v. the got things that I like is carluns, sosbisshow husthe-bos and many more things. Somthing tabuots ~~tv~~ is we can intertonus we can lern more thing that we do not Know now. ~~and coat~~ no more People 1 more thing is that I herd a fiforde "sade," that, ~~tv~~ is very god for littel boys and Grils" "bicas, you cun irchoy it and have fan to lern". "it is berrr to now more things that youKnow now Sav the men" carmorsher are gut to now wat it is now in the stores. wat if you do not now thing that you most like pritendintg that you want a new cah you owes bay the Soyone then you see another sope but you do not new what it is sow you most see.

Now I am going to tell you about wat is not one thing i's that if you get clos you are going to get bloyrd and you want ssee. you mast mir glasses to were anr some times the cormechars af to lane and you wont to see wat you were seing is like you nide to go some hawer els bacas your ma told you but you sed that wen it was finish but the carmosher want Finish. another thiy is wen it dos not want to see well and It is to hard to her. and you hutte to tell evrri bury to be cuait is wen you have to ter it of. some time you do not want to get up to move the shanel anr you har to. Wilik you are tierd and you are rilising that is wen you get much is like wen you want to see a show anr it hus end chard it that iwen youar

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

made af some one ore some thing

It is clear that the writer saw the prompt and was attempting to write a classificatory piece. However, the response exhibits a lack of language control that is severe enough to impair communication. The response is difficult to decipher because of a variety of language control problems, including missing words, problems with word choice and usage, and repeated errors in the spelling of basic words. The writer needs continued language instruction and writing practice to develop his or her fluency.

SCORE POINT 1

STOP

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I'm going to tell you about good things about watching television. It is cultural in some ways. It teaches good things, and you learn from it. You also enjoy it because it shows lots of things you like. These are the good things about watching television.

I'm going to tell you about bad things about watching television. They tell bad words and then they ground you because you said that word. These are the bad things about watching television.

Although this writer discusses the good and bad things about watching television, this classification lacks the specificity to be minimally successful. The writer's presentation of the advantages of watching television is both vague and general (e.g., "It is cultural in some ways" and "It teaches good things"). The single disadvantage addressed ("They tell bad words and then they ground you because you said that word") is also vague and is somewhat confusing as well. The writer fails to explain to whom "they" refers, making it difficult for the reader to understand this idea and how it is an example of a disadvantage of watching television. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to add specific details and explanatory information to illustrate and clarify each idea. This writer would benefit from using prewriting activities to generate and develop ideas and from being given frequent opportunities to use elaboration in order to develop a piece of writing.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I am going to tell you good and bad things about watching television.

One good reason is that we can lern a lot of word. Other one is that I could see moies without going to the moves. The last reson that I have is that I culd see the movis in my house and do not have to go to other house to see.

Now I am going to tell you the bad reson One is that I could get sick of eye if I see to much t.V. Other is that if was watching a good move and they come and put it an other chane we would finght.

Now I have told you all my reson and I hope you like them.

This response is too skeletal and list-like to be minimally successful. The writer gives several reasons for and against watching television but does not develop any of these reasons. For example, after stating the first good thing about television ("One good reason is that we can lern a lot of word"), he or she moves immediately on to the next idea ("Other one is that I could see moies without going to the moves") rather than pausing to elaborate on the first idea. Note that, although the writer exhibits rather limited language control, this language control is not weak enough to impair communication. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to elaborate on some of the reasons given, adding specific details and/or examples to explain each point more fully. This writer would benefit from instruction and practice in the use of elaboration to develop ideas.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

Now I'm going to tell you about the good things and the bad thing about tv. Last Crismas my mom and dad gave a tv to me. I was so happy. It was all rapped up in a box with shiny paper and a humongus bow. When I saw it I had no idei what was inside it. But they wouldn't let me open it first. I had to open all my other presents. I got lots of things I got a pokit Knife and a fishing rod and some flys and tons of other stuff. And some closhs. But I Kept my eye on that grate big box with the shiny paper. Finely it was time to open it. And there it was. My very own tv. set. And to this very day it is on the shelf in my room. And that's my story abou my tv.

This response is unsuccessful because it does not contain the necessary components of classificatory writing. Instead of presenting the good and bad things about watching television, the writer wrote a narrative about receiving a television set for Christmas. To receive a higher score, the writer would need to replace the narrative with a classificatory piece that addresses the advantages and disadvantages of watching television. This writer needs additional instruction in the differences between classificatory and narrative writing, as well as frequent opportunities to practice both kinds of writing.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

SCORE POINT 2

2 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT PRESENTING WHAT IS GOOD AND/OR WHAT IS BAD ABOUT THE SPECIFIED TOPIC. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "2" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that present a minimally sufficient explanation of what is good and/or what is bad about the specified topic.*** These responses may take the following forms:
    - Responses that present a lengthy set of unelaborated ideas, some of which are specific.
    - Responses that present a few specific ideas with at least one idea somewhat elaborated.
    - Responses that present one moderately elaborated idea.
    - Responses that present only one side--no matter how well done--with no allusion to the other side. (For example, "I can't think of any differences" is an allusion to the other side.)

- ***Responses in which the organization may be flawed by gaps, rambling, and/or repetition.*** Although these inconsistencies may disrupt the logical progression of the response, they do not cause confusion.

- ***Responses that exhibit a limited control of written language.*** These responses may contain awkward or simple sentence structures, and word choice may be limited. In addition, the responses may include spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage errors that are likely to occur in first-draft writing.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I am going to tell you the good and bad things about watching television. First I am going to tell you the good things. One is to help you learn more about world events. Another one is that the funny shows make you laugh when your sick. The last one is that there are commersials that help you to say no to drugs and don't drop out of school.

Now I am going to tell you the bad things about watching television. One is the movies could say bad words you shouldn't hear. Another one is that it could make you scared in the scary movies. Next is that watching it too much could hurt your eyes. Last it will waste your time. Now I have told you the good and bad things about watching television.

This response achieves a minimally successful score of 2 through the presentation of a lengthy list of specific ideas. Although similar in some respects to paper C-4 on page 171, it is successful because it contains more ideas, because most of the ideas presented are specific and clear, and because one of the ideas is extended ("...there are commersials that help you to say no to drugs and don't drop out of school"). In addition, the writer demonstrates a good sense of organization, marking transitions from one idea to another (e.g., "First...Another one...Now I am going to tell you..."). To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to expand on some of the ideas presented in the response. For example, the writer could give an example of a world event that he or she learned about by watching television, or the writer could explain how television wastes time.

SCORE POINT 2

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I am going to write a composition to my teacher about what is good about T.V. and about what is bad about T.V. I am going to begin my composition.

the tv shows that come out on tv that I think are good are the ones on channels 23, 24, 14, and 24 the shows I like about channel 23 are Inspector gadget heathcliff and looney tunes. What I like about 24 are He-man and wrestling and 8:00 movies, what I like about channel 14 are the good movies like Loverboy and scrooged and every month title boxing and other famous movies. What I like about channel 24 is Dutman. ~~[illegible]~~. O.K. I think I have said enough Let me begin my next paragraph.

I think tv is bad because it makes quit from doing your homework and is kind of bad for your eyes too. It is also bad cause of too many rated R movies and I dont like some movies like the beast and other movies and you also get to carried away and see movies until it is way past time to go to bed. And like I said movies are fun to see but Bad for your eyes. There is only one way to perevent eye accidents. Please be safe instead of sorry don't get to close to the tv.

I hope you liked my paragraph and that you will follow the safety rules on the fourth paragraph and I recomend the movies I talked about in the second paragraph.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

This response presents a minimally sufficient explanation of the good and bad things about watching television. It presents a number of specific ideas, a few of which are elaborated through the inclusion of examples (e.g., "What I like about 24 are He-man and wrestling and 8:00 movies"). The response has several minor organizational weaknesses that disrupt the logical progression of the classification. For example, the writer repeats the same ideas more than once (e.g., the idea that television can be bad for your eyes). He or she also interrupts the discussion of the disadvantages of watching television to mention an advantage ("And like I said movies are fun to see..."). In addition, the writer includes extraneous information that does not contribute to the classificatory purpose of the piece (the "safety rule" on how to avoid eye accidents). These flaws detract from the effectiveness of the piece but, since they are not severe enough to confuse the reader, do not prevent the response from receiving a passing score. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to elaborate on his or her ideas in greater detail and would need to improve the organization of the piece by eliminating repetition and extraneous ideas and by moving the reference to an advantage out of the discussion of disadvantages.

SCORE POINT 2

STOP

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I'm going to tell you some good and bad things about television. One good thing about television is that they show very good movi'es like head of the class and Growing Pains that talk about kids and their promblems. Anther good thing is that the movi'es on cinemax is that they don't have comershells so you don't have to watch stupi'd things. The last good reason is that my t.v. has cineamax for free.

Now I am going to tell you bad things about television. One thing about bad television is that they give vilent movi'es at night and the day time. Another bad reason is that I hate some of the stupid lovestory movi'es that they give on television sometimes. The last reason is that if your T.V. is broken you have to go to the movi'es or just stay there playin around.

Now I have told you some good and bad reasons about watching television.

This response is well organized and provides enough specific elaboration to be minimally successful. The writer presents one somewhat elaborated idea (the discussion of "very good movies" at the beginning of the response) and several extended ideas (e.g., "One thing about bad television is that they give vilent movies at night and the day time"). To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to further develop some of the ideas in the response, providing additional specific details to help the reader formulate a more complete understanding of the writer's ideas. For example, the writer might provide additional information to explain why he or she hates some of the "stupid lovestory movies" shown on television.

SCORE POINT 2

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I am writing this composition to tell you what is good about T.V.. First let me tell you what is good about T.V. What I like and what I think is good is the Discovery Channel is fun to see it and intresting, too becaus you can learn the real life about animals and also the History of important persons like Presidents or other famous people. Like one time I saw a realy intresting program about Martin Luther King I learned a lot about his life and I saw some of his famous speeches he made. I also learned about when he got killed. Another thing that I like to do or look at is experiments on T.V. I think it's fun to watch them because they do different science Experiments and at the same time you are learning something that is useful. Like you could learn to make a volcano with Mister Wizerd using bakeing soder. Or else you could see how magnets work on your fridge. Another good thing about T.V. is the comedy programs. I like them because they always make me laught

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

even when I don't feel so good. My favorites are Growing Pains and Whos the boss. I like them best because they have kids on them like me and they have stories about kids.

This response presents three moderately elaborated ideas (the Discovery channel, science experiments on television, and comedy programs). The paper is organized and controlled, and each idea is supported through the inclusion of specific examples and details that help the reader to understand the writer's point of view (e.g., "Like you could learn to make a volcano with Mister Wizerd using bakeing soder"). The only reason that the response did not achieve a higher score is that the writer did not address the bad things about watching television. In classificatory writing, in order to achieve a score higher than 2, the writer must address both sides of the issue. In this particular response the writer's presentation of the good things about watching television is organized, elaborated, and controlled enough that the writer need only allude to the bad things about watching television (e.g., "I can't think of anything bad about watching television") in order to receive a higher score.

SCORE POINT 2

STOP

SCORE POINT 3

3 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT GOOD ATTEMPTS AT PRESENTING WHAT IS GOOD AND/OR WHAT IS BAD ABOUT THE SPECIFIED TOPIC. THE WRITER MAY FOCUS ON ONE SIDE, BUT THERE MUST BE AT LEAST SOME ALLUSION TO THE OTHER SIDE. THE READER HAS NO DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WRITER IS ATTEMPTING TO SAY. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "3" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that present a moderately elaborated explanation of what is good and/or what is bad about the specified topic.***
    - Responses that present a lengthy set of ideas, one of which is moderately elaborated or several of which are somewhat elaborated.
    - Responses that present a number of ideas, most of which are somewhat elaborated.
    - Responses that present two or more moderately elaborated ideas.
    - Responses that present one fully elaborated idea.
- ***Responses that have an organizational strategy that is, for the most part, consistent, although occasional gaps, rambling, and/or repetition may occur.***
- ***Responses that exhibit a control of the written language, although errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage may occur in these first-draft attempts.***

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I am going to write about the good things of television. a television has many good and bad things. For example a good thing about television is that some programs are about nature. It may show your child what nature is, another thing is that many of the programs show expression in their acting or singing, But still other programs show what to do in a emergency. They may even tell some of the emergensies the Valley has had

The news is another good thing about T.V. It informs you of all the thing that happening in our state, or other states. I hope you liked my composition about good things about television.

Now I am going to tell about bad things of television. While there good things about television there are also bad things about television; One bad thing about television is the movies, Especially the horror movies They may give your child's brain bad ideas to do. another kind of movie are the midnight movies sometimes girls come out in little clothing. I hope you also liked my composision about bad things of television

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Although this response is uneven in the quality of the elaboration, it achieves a score of 3 by virtue of its overall effectiveness. In the discussion of the good things about watching television, the writer presents a number of advantages but develops these ideas only minimally. For example, the writer mentions that one of the good things about television is that "some programs are about nature," then adds one piece of information to this bare idea ("It may show your child what nature is"). However, this additional piece of information is still rather general and contributes little to the reader's understanding of what is good about watching television. In order to improve the quality of the development of this idea, the writer would need to go into greater detail, specifying, for example, what aspects of nature these programs show. The writer elaborates more successfully in the second part of the response, in which he or she gives specific examples of the kinds of movies that are "bad." To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to elaborate more evenly, adding specific and relevant details throughout the response.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

I am going to tell you the bad and good things about waching a television.

First I am going to tell you the bad things about wathing a television. One reason is that you may have homework and you start seing a movie, you get aslep and do not do your homework. The next day you go to school and the teacher gets after you. Another thing is you may stay late and on the other morning you don't want to go to school. The last reason is that you migth see nasty movies and they are not good for you I saw they are not good for you because they are not for a person like our age. They will maybe be for big persons that do not want to learn nothing.

Now I am going to tell you the good things about waching a television. On reason is that you can learn what the good things are and the bad things are. Another reason is that you can hear the news like who has dye, or what is going to be the weather from the week. If a hurricane or something is going to happen. The last reason that is good is just for enjoyment. Like waching cartoons, a funny program or a funny movie. This good things about waching a television might make you feel good and maybe proud of your-

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self because you don't like to see bad. things in television.

Now I have told you the good things and the bad things about waching a television I hope if someone will ask what will you like best I will say good.

Although this writer's control of language is not as strong as that found in many "3" papers, the response is successful because it presents an organized, lengthy list of what is good and bad about watching television. Many of the points made are quite specific and are supported by examples and/or additional information. For example, the writer mentions that one of the advantages of watching television is that you can hear the news; he or she then gives specific examples of what you can hear on the news ("...like who has dye, or what is going to be the weather from the week. If a hurricane or something is going to happen"). Some of the points made, however, are rather vague. This detracts from the overall effectiveness of the piece. For example, the last idea in the response ("This good things about waching a television might make you feel good and maybe proud of yourself because you don't like to see bad things in television") is confusing. In order for the reader to understand how this sentence represents a good thing about watching television, the writer would need to provide enough additional information that the reader understands exactly what the writer means. In order to achieve a higher score, this writer would need to develop and clarify his or her ideas by providing additional specific information to explain more fully each of the points presented in the response.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

I'm going to tell you some good things and bad things about watching television

Some good things are that you can learn about new things like animals and how they live, and about indians and their history. You can also find out about what's happening in your city and all around the world, and what the weather would be. And we can also find out where we should buy different things and what the best prices are.

Now I'm going to tell you some bad things. One of them is if you watch to much television your eyes will hurt. Another thing is that television might keep you from doing things around your house, or keeping you from doing your homework. Then your mom will get mad at you and you might get grounded. And also if you stay up real late at night watching it, you might see bad movies that will scare you and you will have nightmares that night. But another good thing is that there are some good, funny movies too like E.T.. Now I have told you some good things and bad things about watching T.V. I hope

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GO ON

you agree with what I said.

This response contains an organized and controlled presentation of a number of somewhat elaborated ideas. The writer elaborates on the good things about watching television by giving specific examples of what one can learn from watching television. In presenting the other side of the issue, the writer explains in some detail the possible negative consequences of watching television, demonstrating an ability to "layer" information--that is, to present successively deeper levels, or layers, of information about an idea. For example, the writer states that watching "television might keep you from doing things around your house, or keeping you from doing your homework." He or she then takes that point even further, describing what might then happen as a result of not doing chores or housework ("Then your mom will get mad at you and you might get grounded"). While the response is generally well organized, it does have one minor flaw. The writer devotes paragraph three to a discussion of what is bad about watching television but inserts a sentence about what is good about watching television near the end of the paragraph. This digression is not a serious enough flaw to affect the score of the response, since it does not cause confusion and only briefly interrupts the logical progression of thought. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to eliminate this organizational flaw and to improve the quality of elaboration by developing his or her ideas more completely and/or presenting additional elaborated ideas.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

Mr. Belkrin I am going to tell you why television is good and sometimes bad. Sometimes you car never know if there good or bad for you. Let me began to tell you whats good.

Watching television is nice because I can learn important things like on the Cosby show and the Brady Bunch, they teach you not to do bad thing and may teach you important lessons about life. I like Whose the Boss too because it entertairs us. We need a good laugh every once in awhile. Watching the news is sometimes helpful because they can tell you whats happening in different states. It's good to keep up also with world events. And now I could tell you why television is also bad for you.

Also watching television is not good. Sometimes I don't like television because it could hurt your eyes. Like when it's in the afternoon when you see television you can sometimes see the refliction and you might get too close to the television and that could hurt your eyes. Also on television they can show nasty things that kids shouldn't be seeing. Like on channel 123 theres a lot of nasty things that children shouldn't

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GO ON

see. Some movies could teach children to start stealing and to hurt people.

In this response the writer presents a number of good and bad points about watching television, most of which are somewhat elaborated. The writer also includes specific information to explain many of the points he or she makes. For example, in talking about the advantages of watching television, the writer states that he or she likes "Whose the Boss" then develops this idea further by adding two additional pieces of supporting information--that it "entertains us" and that "We need a good laugh every once in awhile." Likewise, in the paragraph addressing the bad things about television, the writer elaborates on the idea that television can hurt your eyes by giving specific examples of when and how this might happen. In addition, the response is well organized and does not contain extraneous information. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to develop more fully the ideas he or she has presented in this response, stopping along the way to "tell more" about some of them. For example, the writer could further develop the first point ("Watching television is nice because I can learn important things...") by explaining what important things he or she can learn from television.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

SCORE POINT 4

4 = RESPONSES THAT ARE CONSISTENT AND ELABORATED PRESENTATIONS OF WHAT IS GOOD AND/OR WHAT IS BAD ABOUT THE SPECIFIED TOPIC. THE WRITER MAY FOCUS ON ONE SIDE, BUT THERE MUST BE AT LEAST SOME ALLUSION TO THE OTHER SIDE. THE FEW INCONSISTENCIES THAT MAY OCCUR ARE OVERWHELMED BY THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE. THESE RESPONSES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY MOST OF THE FOLLOWING:

- ***A specific, well-elaborated presentation of what is good and/or what is bad about the topic.***

- ***A consistent organizational strategy.*** Although minor lapses may occur, these responses have a clear sense of order and completeness. If an otherwise well-written response ends abruptly because the writer has run out of space, the paper is still eligible for a "4."

- ***Consistent control of the written language.*** Though the writer may not incorporate all of the appropriate mechanics or conventions of language, the response is particularly effective.

In addition, these responses often contain some special feature that makes them particularly effective, such as:

- ●● Varied syntactic constructions, including compound and complex sentences.
- ●● Effective word choice, including apt or striking words, phrases, or expressions.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

I like having a T.V. because I can relax on a weekend day and watch my favorite programs like my carton shows. When you are alone and have nobody to talk to you've got the T.V. Its just like having people around cause theres always someone talking that keeps your mind off being alone. It makes it not as scary. Another good thing about T.V. is you [illegible] can watch it anytime if you're mom and dad will let you. Like when you finish your homework or your chores and if there is nuthing else to do. One more thing, you can sit down and eat supper or brake fast on weekends in front of it. Also, it will make you feel happy when youre feeling sad or when it is rainy day and none of your friends can come over to see you. But in conclusion

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GO ON

with the good things there comes the bad things. First, color T.V.S are expensive and the remote costs extra. If you want cabel that costs extra too and you have to keep paying for it evry month. The second thing is when you get one you have to maitain it. If it brakes you have to get it fixed and that will cost you money. When you have friends over your mom says you shouldn't watch it cause there may be something on that you can't watch cause its too scary or you can only watch PG stuff. Your friend may not care but your mom does. So I like T.V. and I wouldn't want to live in a house without one.

This response is unified, consistent, and well elaborated. The writer provides specific details to explain each idea presented, which gives the reader a clear understanding of the writer's views. For example, the writer states that one of the good things is that "you can watch it anytime if you're mom and dad will let you," then develops this idea by specifying some of the times when one might want to watch television (e.g., "Like when you finish your homework or your chores and if there is nuthing else to do"). The response is also well organized: although the writer presents both sides of the issue in the same paragraph, there is a logical progression from idea to idea, making the response as a whole easy to follow. Note that this writer addressed the good and bad things about having a television rather than the good and bad things about watching television. This did not lower the score of the response, however, since some variation in interpretation of the prompt is allowed. While the response does not reach the level of fluency or specificity found in some other "4" papers, its overall effectiveness earns it a score of 4.

SCORE POINT 4

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

No way don't take away my tv. I need it when I'm alone on the days when my mom works late shift. It is something to keep me so that I don't get scared. Its better than a pet because it keeps you entertained theres always something to watch so that I don't think about scary thing like burglers, murders or salespeople trying to get me. another good thing is that I can learn some neat things form t.v. like on PBS. When I was little I watched Sesame Street, 3-2-1 Contact, Mister Rogers. These shows helped me to read and write. This helped me get ahead in school. But there are also bad things. First the television may take up all your free time so that you never go outside to play. Then you don't get good exersize and your body won't be healthy. The second thing is that they can break and are very expensive to fix.

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The third thing is that if you have friends over you may watch t.v. instead of seeing you friends and talking to them. That would be very rude. Your parents would be upset espcily if your grand parent's were visiting.

These are the good and bad things of having a t.v. but please don't take my t.v. away.

This response is organized and well elaborated. The writer presents in great detail a number of advantages and disadvantages to watching television. With each new idea, the writer stops to "tell more," which leaves the reader with a clear understanding of what the writer thinks about watching television. For example, the writer states, "I can learn some neat things form t.v.," then develops this idea in detail, giving examples of shows he or she has learned from and how those shows have been helpful. Varied sentence structure and the use of concrete vocabulary also contributes to the effectiveness of the response.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

Now I know everybody knows about television. And everybody knows about the good and bad things about television so how about if we can compare our opinion on the good and bad things about television. I'll begin with the good things. The good things are it's educational sometimes. Like say for instance Square One or The Cosby Show. Square One is all about math. The Cosby Show is about growing up. The Cosby is good in another way also because if your in a bad mood you'll be brighten up. Square One teaches you about match problems so that you can do better in school. Television also intertains. You have movies on Saturday night. Theres also the news and Opa Winfey. You can watch Whel of Fortine with Vanna White. Or there is Jepardy to learn new words. Televisin is educational, entertainant and fun. The bad thing are that you will spend to much time in frunt of the tv. You may ruin your eyesite and fill up your brains with

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stupid ideas from commercials. Sometimes they talk about cleaning your dishes without spots or how to get your floors shiny. Or da there may be a commercie on food that you must buy like snacks that aren't that nutrious. Little kids may watch the programs and commercils and get influinced. They will ask there parents to buy what they see on T.V. even though they don't need it. They will waste there parents money and buy something stupid. Too much t.v. especialy after being in school all day can ruin your sight. If you watch t.v. in a dark room, your eyes may get strained and you may someday need glasses. Television can also interfear with homework. You will spead time watching instead of doing your work. You will then have trouble in school. Your grades will fall and you won't be able to play on Saturday. The best idea is get rid of it before its too late.

This response represents a fluent and well-developed presentation of the good and bad things about watching television. The writer uses a consistent organizational strategy, discussing each idea thoroughly before moving on to the next idea, and marking transitions clearly. The response also demonstrates a clear sense of beginning and ending. In addition, the writer demonstrates the ability to develop ideas through elaboration, providing rich details and examples to explain each point. While there are some minor spelling errors, these are to be expected in first-draft writing and do not detract from the effectiveness of the response.

STOP

SCORE POINT 4

There are good and bad things about T.V. The good points are the information it gives you and the entertainment. The bad points are time wasted and brain power.

You can learn alot from T.V. There is the news every morn. and night. Dan Rater talks to us about news in N.Y., the middle East, Florida, and Europe. We can learn alot from waching the news. There is also PBS with stories about animals and people in other countrys. There is also alot of entertainement. Movies, comedys, talk shows. If your watch Oprah Winfrie you can learn alot and also be entertained. There are plenty of plenty of movies to watch — some are funny, some are sad. It keeps you laughing or crying. Movies like Bad News Bears can keep you interested. I like to watch Cosby and Different Strokes. That's whats good.

The bad things about T.V. are what it does to your mind and how much time you waste. My mother always tells me that my brain is not

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working as hard when I watch T. V. I just sit their, not thinking. My brain is not working - I am not using my imagination or figuring up math problems. I could be doing something to help my brain work more like puzzles or read a book, or play games with my sister. Instead I just sit and waste time. My mom thinks it is realy sad. She could use me to help her fold cloths or wash dishes or make beds. Or I could help my dad haul wood or wash the cars. Or I could do more homework.

These are the good and bad things about T. V.

This response achieves a 4 by virtue of its strong organization, clarity, and specificity. The response demonstrates a clear sense of beginning and ending. The writer presents an organizational strategy in a clear and concise introduction, then follows this plan throughout the response. Each idea introduced in the response is relevant to the classificatory task and is supported with numerous specific examples and vivid details. For example, after the writer says, "my brain is not working as hard when I watch T.V.," he or she then gives a number of examples of other activities that would require more thought (e.g, "...like puzzles or read a book, or play games with my sister"). In addition, the writer has a clear control of written language.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS Grade 5 Scoring Guide for Persuasive / Descriptive Writing

PERSUASIVE

Your principal is going to invite a famous person to visit your school and has asked you and your classmates for ideas. Write a letter to your principal. In this letter tell which person you would like the principal to invite and give reasons for your choice.

SCORE POINT 0

0 = RESPONSES THAT ARE NOT SCORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE BLANK OR FAIL IN OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE TASK. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "0" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses in which the student writes on an entirely different topic than the one specified.***
- ***Responses in which the student makes an attempt to respond, but this attempt contains so little writing that the reader cannot discern whether the student is responding to the prompt.***
- ***Responses in which the student repeats or paraphrases the prompt but does not attempt to respond to it.***
- ***Responses in which the student writes entirely in a language other than English.***
- ***Responses that are completely unreadable because they are illegible or incoherent.*** Illegible responses are those in which the handwriting cannot be read; letters may be discernible, but they do not form recognizable words. Incoherent responses are those in which letters or words are strung together in a meaningless fashion.
- ***Responses that contain nothing more than an explicit refusal to respond to the specified prompt, although the student may offer some explanation of his or her refusal.***
- ***Blank papers.***

SCORE POINT 1

1 = RESPONSES THAT ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS THE TASK BUT ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL. THE FOLLOWING KINDS OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "1" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that use the wrong purpose/mode; i.e., they do not include the requisite components of persuasive/descriptive writing.*** In these responses the writer does not make a clear choice and provide reasons for that choice to a specified audience.

- ***Responses that are persuasive/descriptive but are unsuccessful in their presentation.*** Responses that attempt to address the task but are not successful may take the following forms:

  - Responses that present a brief phrase with some indication of an attempt to attend to the task.

  - Responses that address the topic in a skeletal way. These responses may present a choice along with one or more reasons, and there may even be a little elaboration of these reasons, but the information and explanation are insufficient to provide a minimally sound case in support of the choice made.

  - Responses in which the reader must infer the relationship between the information presented and the point that the information is intended to clarify.

  - Responses that attend very briefly to the task but do not remain on topic. These responses acknowledge the assignment but then switch to another topic.

- ***Responses that are poorly organized.*** In these responses the writer may present reasons in a random or repetitive fashion, thereby causing gaps that require the reader to infer the writer's intended thoughts; or the writer may ramble, presenting numerous details that do not enhance the argument.

- ***Responses that exhibit an overall lack of control of written language so that communication is impaired.*** The expression of the writer's thoughts is so confusing that the reader is left wondering what the writer is attempting to say.

  - At the word level there may be repeated errors in the spelling of basic words, in word choice, and/or in usage.

  - At the sentence level confusion occurs when words are not arranged in a logical order, or when there is an apparent order but the meaning is nevertheless unclear. It is inappropriate for the reader to guess at the writer's intent or to make inferences about the writer's meaning.

  - At the composition level responses lack explicit connections between ideas, and attempts at illustrations or explanations of ideas are either irrelevant or repetitious.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition
Grade 5

I would like Michale Jordon to come to our school. I want him at our so he can have lunch with us. And also we can show him around. Then maybe he could tell us some of his basketball experences. Michale Jordon is my biggest Fan. That is why I want him to come to our school.

This response gives several unelaborated reasons why Michael Jordan should visit the school. Although one of these reasons is specific ("so he can have lunch with us"), most are general and need clarification (e.g., "he could tell us some of his basketball experences"). In addition, none of the writer's reasons is elaborated. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to generate more specific reasons (e.g., "we can show him our classroom and our gym") or to give additional information about the existing reasons (e.g., "he could tell us some of his basketball experiences like when he scored 50 points last year"). It would be especially important for the writer to learn how to develop ideas in enough specific detail to create an effective persuasive response.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

We should have football player talk be cause most kids like foot ball and it will make you tough but won't change you and its a good sport that can kept your body in shape as builk it up, If someone want to something else they and had to be strong they could and of sone one is in terestin it they could go farther or If they want to go drom dance to a rough sport foot is it, and you can build your musles to do a lot it can Help in jimasics foot must have strenth like dancing and jimsatics to or you can protect your sefe in football you cane have a game and get money from the tickats.

so its a lot of resons you should have foot ball player and why I like foot ball, be cause foot balle is fun and it athletic, lifting weights runing and is a good persen to have for the school.

The writer demonstrates an understanding of the persuasive task by choosing a famous person and attempting to explain why that person should come to the school, but the response is unsuccessful because of severe language control problems. Missing words, misspellings of basic words, and confused word order (e.g., "If someone want to something else they and had to be strong they could and of sone one is in terestin it...") impair communication, leaving the reader wondering at times what the writer is attempting to say. Continued language instruction and frequent opportunities to write should help the writer to gain the language control necessary to write a successful response.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I would like for Madona to come visit us. She has great music. Madona could sing 3 songs it could be like a school consert.

After the consent we could all get her signture cut in are hair so evrybody know we saw her.

This response is merely a short list of reasons that inadequately support the writer's choice of Madonna as the "best" famous person to visit the school. Although the last reason ("we could all get her signture cut in are hair") is extended ("so evrybody know we saw her"), the response as a whole remains too skeletal to be minimally successful. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to give additional specific reasons or to elaborate more fully on the existing ones. In addition, this writer needs instruction and practice in how to use elaboration to support a persuasive position.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I would like to ask you if you could invite Pres. Bush to talk about how we can help save the United States and tell what we don't know about the white house and being a president so we could be a president someday.

Another person I want you to invite is Our State Governor. So we could tell herto don't put beer or smacking comercials on T.V. And Put more don't drink and drive and no smocing commercals on T.V.

Another person is our mayor, So we could have more recycle centers. That would help to save our envirment. And put bigger streets signs on so drivers could know where they are or see speed limits better.

Although the prompt directs the writer to choose only one person to visit the school, he or she recommends three separate nominees. The writer briefly discusses the reasons for each of these choices but does not provide enough information about any of them to be minimally successful. The first paragraph is, for the most part, skeletal and general. For example, the writer says that President Bush could tell students how they "can help save the United States" but doesn't provide any additional specific details to explain what this statement means. The second paragraph is a brief, bare list of possible commercials that the governor should or should not put on television. The last paragraph is stronger than the other paragraphs because the writer lists two reasons for inviting the mayor and supports these reasons with a little elaboration. This elaboration, however, is not sufficient to make the response minimally successful. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to choose only one famous person, developing in specific detail reasons to support that choice. This writer would benefit from remediation in staying on the task specified in the prompt, as well as from frequent writing opportunities to learn how to use elaboration effectively to develop ideas.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

Dear Principal,

I would like to invite George Bush, because I have never seen him in real life before Gorge Bush is very famous to some people but some of the people don't like him. I like presidents because if we didn't presidents on earth there will be no peace on earth. My classmate has suggeusted some singers, stars basketball player, baseball player, football players, and soccerplayers.

So please invite George Bush. This is my chance to meet him in real life. I just see him on news.

This response is unsuccessful because much of the information the writer includes does not contribute to the persuasive purpose specified by the prompt. For example, neither the sentence that some people don't like George Bush nor the other suggestions made by a classmate enhance the argument or move the response forward. In fact, these detract from the persuasiveness of the response. There is only one elaborated reason that provides explicit support for the writer's choice of George Bush ("I have never seen him in real life before...This is my chance to meet him in real life. I just see him on news"). To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to delete the extraneous material and to focus on giving specific, supported reasons explaining why George Bush should visit the school. Learning to distinguish between effective and ineffective elaboration would benefit this writer.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I heard that your to invite a famouse
person so who you thanking about inviting
or have you not decided If you need
any help just come get me and I will
tell you who to pick to come get us
but first we have to make some changes
around the school first we have to
mow the grass cut the bushes pick up
the trash wash the windows clean up
the class rooms mop the floors put the
desk in a neat row and clean the
chalk boards and bang the erasers clean
and clean the cafetria real good and
the bafrooms and paint the chapter classes
and scrub the walls in the halls and
maybe put up some posters and
drawings even a great big wellcom sign.
Now let me tell you who to ivite I
wan't you to invite Big Daddy Krae.
Because He can sang very good he
is cool and I like his Rapping.

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Although the writer includes some persuasive elements at both the beginning and the end of the response (last two sentences), the response as a whole does not contain sufficient components of persuasive writing to be minimally successful. Instead of writing a sustained persuasive composition on the topic specified in the prompt, the writer focuses on how to make the school look more attractive before the visitor comes. In this "how-to" part of the response, the writer does demonstrate the ability to generate and develop ideas; however, to write a successful persuasive composition, he or she would need to apply this ability to persuasive rather than "how-to" writing, supporting his or her choice with specific, detailed reasons. The writer needs remediation in writing a sustained persuasive composition. As part of this remediation process, he or she would benefit from practice in using prewriting activities to learn to focus on the persuasive task.

SCORE POINT 1

STOP

SCORE POINT 2

2 = RESPONSES THAT ARE MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT ADDRESSING THE PERSUASIVE TASK. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "2" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that present a minimally sufficient amount of evidence in support of the writer's stated choice.*** These responses may take the following forms:
    - Responses that present a lengthy set of unelaborated reasons, some of which are specific, in support of the writer's stated choice.
    - Responses that present a number of reasons, most of which are extended, in support of the writer's stated choice.
    - Responses that present a few reasons, at least one of which is somewhat elaborated, in support of the writer's stated choice.
    - Responses that present one moderately elaborated reason in support of the writer's stated choice.
- ***Responses in which the organization may be flawed by gaps, rambling, and/or repetition.*** Although these inconsistencies may disrupt the logical progression of the response, they do not cause confusion.
- ***Responses that exhibit a limited control of written language.*** These responses may contain awkward or simple sentence structures, and word choice may be limited. In addition, the responses may include spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage errors that are likely to occur in first-draft writing.

I would like for you to invite Jordan Knight. Some of the reasons for this are; he encourages kids not to take drugs, he wants kids to finsh school, and wants them to live up to their dreams. Jordan loves to meet new kids around the world and likes to answer questions. Some of the students in my class would like to see him. My teacher also likes him. He can be funny too.

Please invite him, so we can meet him.

This response is a minimally successful attempt to persuade the reader that Jordan Knight should visit the school. The writer presents a list of reasons explaining why Jordan Knight should come to the school. Except for one general reason ("he can be funny"), this list is specific and clearly supports the writer's choice. Although none of these reasons is elaborated, the specificity and number of reasons make the response minimally successful. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to elaborate on some of the existing reasons by adding relevant, specific information.

SCORE POINT 2

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

Dear Principal,

I would like to invite The new kids on the block. I like there music. I've got lots of book about them. I like all of them. I know all there names. I like there vidos. I've got a tape, My favrite songs are Cover Girl, Step by Step, My favorite Girl, What'cha gona do about it, The right stuff. I would ask lots of quaintion. I get there otograph. I watch there movies. I like the movie on the disney cannal. It is Hagin tough live. I listen to them when I'm doing my home work and when I'm playing. My sister even listens to them. We listen to them when when we sleep. I like the new kids on the block. There my favorite singers. The song I like the very best is Cover Girl. The song I like next is What'cha gona do about it. The third song I like is My favorite girl. New kids on the block are the best.

Yours truely,

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

This response is minimally successful because it presents a sufficient amount of specific information explaining why New Kids on the Block should come to the school. Although the writer includes a number of reasons for liking the group, most of these reasons contain little or no elaboration. For example, the writer says that he or she "would ask lots of quointion" but never specifies what these questions would be. However, the writer does provide some detailed information about the group's songs, including a list of the writer's favorites. The response is weakened by the lack of an overall organizational strategy. The writer moves in a seemingly random fashion from liking the group's music to having books about them to liking the group itself to knowing their names, and so on. This random movement causes the writer to be repetitious in places. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to improve the organization of the response, as well as the quality of the elaboration. This writer would benefit from instruction and practice in elaboration and in the use of prewriting activities to organize ideas.

SCORE POINT 2

STOP

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

The famous person I want you to invite to our school is Paula Abdul. The reason I want you to invite her because she's nice and sings very well. She sings a lot of songs that I realy like to hear like Straight Up, Cold Hearted Snake, and Oppisites Attchate. I want to know how old she is. She dances very well and is kind of cute. She's very smart and creative. She could talk to us about drugs and tell us not to use them and what happens when you do. Who would you want to invite to our school. Ask her if she will wright me back soon, please.

The writer achieves minimal success in this response by presenting a few reasons why Paula Abdul should visit the school. Although some of these reasons are general (e.g., "she's nice"), others are specific (e.g., "I want to know how old she is"), and still others are elaborated. For example, the writer's description of Paula Abdul's talk to students is somewhat elaborated ("She could talk to us about drugs and tell us not to use them and what happens when you do"). This response is organized but does not contain the elaboration necessary to achieve a score of 3. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to strengthen the persuasiveness of the response by providing additional specific, relevant detail about some of the existing reasons.

SCORE POINT 2

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

I would like ROBOCOP to come to this school. He could teach us many things. Everyone likes him so they would listen to him. He would tell us about drugs, crime, and how to call 911 for palice. He will tell us how to help outher pepeol when there in trumbel. He'll tell us to don't play with fire that it can hurt us and any outher pepeol, and it can can burn a house so there is no place to live anymore. And he will tell us if we want to be smart stay in school and if your lucky and go to colleg then you can be a palice man like him. Please invite ROBOCOP so he can teach us all these things.

In this response the writer achieves a 2 by presenting one moderately elaborated reason. After the writer establishes that Robocop should come to the school so that he can "teach us many things," the writer then expands on this theme, focusing on the specific lessons that Robocop would teach students. Although some of these lessons are merely listed (e.g., Robocop would tell students about "drugs, crime, and how to call 911 for palice"), others are elaborated (e.g., why students shouldn't "play with fire"). In addition, the response is organized, and the writer's progression of thought is easy to follow. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need either to elaborate more fully on some of the lessons that Robocop would teach or to generate additional elaborated reasons about why Robocop should come to the school.

SCORE POINT 2

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

SCORE POINT 3

3 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT GOOD ATTEMPTS AT ADDRESSING THE PERSUASIVE TASK BY MAKING A CHOICE AND SUPPORTING THAT CHOICE WITH REASON(S). IDEAS ARE GENERALLY WELL-ORGANIZED AND ARE SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR SO THAT THE READER HAS NO DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WRITER IS ATTEMPTING TO SAY. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "3" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that present a moderate amount of evidence in support of the writer's stated choice.*** These responses may take the following forms:
    - Responses that present a lengthy set of reasons, one of which is moderately elaborated or several of which are somewhat elaborated, in support of the writer's stated choice.
    - Responses that present a number of reasons, most of which are somewhat elaborated, in support of the writer's stated choice.
    - Responses that present two or more moderately elaborated reasons in support of the writer's stated choice.
    - Responses that present one fully elaborated reason--i.e., a reason elaborated sufficiently to be clearly understood and convincing--in support of the writer's stated choice.
- ***Responses that have an organizational strategy that is, for the most part, consistent, although occasional gaps, rambling, and/or repetition may occur.***
- ***Responses that exhibit a control of the written language, although errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage may occur in these first-draft attempts.***

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I would like you to invite Michael Jordan. He would proapy give us a good ideal about a edecacion about sports. He would proaply show us how to play better basketball. How to play safer. He would tell us to eat good vegtables and milk and other things so you can play better. An exsersice to jump an run faster. If you can do all those things you,ll have a better health and win more games.

Usauly every body is strugling for mony so if you can play well enouph to play Pro basketball you would proaply get a littel bit more mony. Proaply almost every body knows Micheal Jordan and wants to see him. Now they can see him here for free. Alot of people dont have that much money to go see a game and this is proaply there chance to see him live. This is my choice of the famous person! The end!

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

This response presents two moderately elaborated reasons. In the first reason the writer says that Jordan could educate students about sports and show them how to play basketball better. The writer cites the areas Jordan could address (how to play safely, and how diet and exercise can help you play better), occasionally adding a little clarifying detail (e.g., the purpose of exercise is to jump and run faster). The writer reaches the level of moderate elaboration by tying all of these areas together with a cause-and-effect argument that better playing and better health mean winning more games and making more money by playing pro basketball. In the second reason the writer focuses solely on the subject of money, explaining that, since Jordan's appearance at the school would be free, people who don't have much money would have an opportunity to see him. Although the writer does not display the consistent language control characteristic of some "3" responses, the overall quality of the response is sufficient to earn it a score of 3. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to establish better transitions between ideas and to elaborate more fully on the reasons given.

SCORE POINT 3

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I would like you to chose Bill Cosby. I would like for you to chose him because he cares about us and our grads. Another reson is he's fun to be with. He is always telling jokes about himself making people laugh.

He also helps other people. He even came to our town to help a school here. He preformed and didn't keep the money he gave it to the school.

He could talk to us on the stage. He could talk to us about things he dos and about the studio. He can tell us what his favort move he made. He can also discrid what it looks like back stage.

This response contains a number of reasons, most of which are somewhat elaborated. Although the first reason is only briefly extended ("he cares about us and our grads"), the rest of the reasons are more solidly supported through the use of illustration ("telling jokes about himself"), anecdote ("He even came to our town..."), and specific details (what Cosby could talk about on stage). The response is generally well organized, and the writer's progression of thought is easy to follow from beginning to end. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to provide more elaboration on some of the reasons, perhaps by giving more information about Cosby's previous trip to the town or about other ways he has helped people, or by expanding on some of the topics he might discuss on stage.

SCORE POINT 3

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

If I were you I would invite Debbie Gibson because she has lots of talents. Shes a very good listener and likes to help peple with there problems.

She might help out in music class, she could tell us how she learned to sing so good. She could tell us what Education means to her and what she had to lern about in school to be famus.

May be she been to our school before, and she might sing for us. May be we might have a talent show and she would help us get our rutines better.

And students can learn alot by having interveiws about her or writing a report for school.

If she comes the school would be famous all over the world we might be on television or on the news paper and we oh it all to you our princeipal. You might think I have an amagination but I don't. Our school might be called the Debbie Gibson School. So invite Debbie Gibson.

This response represents a good attempt to persuade the principal to invite Debbie Gibson to the school. The writer presents a lengthy set of reasons in support of his or her choice, many of which are elaborated. Although the elaboration is not extensive, it is sufficient to help the reader to have a greater understanding of the writer's reasons for inviting Debbie Gibson to visit (e.g., "May be we might have a talent show and she would help us get our rutines better"). The first part of the sentence beginning the third paragraph ("May be she been to our school before") creates a minor organizational weakness because the writer never explains this seemingly irrelevant statement; otherwise, however, the response is generally well organized. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to delete the irrelevant material and to elaborate more fully on the existing reasons that support his or her choice.

SCORE POINT 3

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I would like for you to invite David Robbison to come visit our school. Because I think he's a good influence on kids. He's a good influence in many ways. For one, he encourages kid's to go for what they want. And he also tells them to staydrugfree and alcoholfree so that thay can accomplish their dreams. He also tell's kid's that thier family comes first and then school and then sports.

But he's also a good influence by what he does. He tries to help kid's who are disable and mentely retarted. And he donates money to diffrent fund's like for kid with Aid's a MS and lukemia. He also visits them in hospitals and encourages other's to visit them too. David doesn't have kids of his own but he wished he did cause he likes helping kids and being around kid's.

All of the reasons above is why I think he's the best person to come visit us. He's also my favorite basketball player.

This response represents a good attempt at addressing the persuasive task. It focuses almost entirely on one reason for having David Robinson come to the school ("he's a good influence on kid's"), and this reason is well supported. First, the writer discusses how Robinson can positively influence the students through the things he tells them (e.g., "to stay drugfree and alcoholfree so that thay can accomplish their dreams"). In the second paragraph the writer focuses on the good deeds performed by Robinson, again providing specific examples (e.g., "He tries to help kid's who are disable and mentely retarted"). The last sentence, while presenting an additional bare reason, functions also as a conclusion to the response. Overall, the response is organized and demonstrates an effective use of transitions. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to provide additional elaboration for the existing reasons or to include additional elaborated reasons.

SCORE POINT 3

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

SCORE POINT 4

4 = RESPONSES THAT ARE CONSISTENT, SPECIFIC, AND ELABORATED. THE WRITER ACHIEVES SUCCESS WITH THE PERSUASIVE TASK BY MAKING A CHOICE AND PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR THAT CHOICE THROUGH REASONS, SOME OF WHICH ARE CLEARLY AND LOGICALLY DEVELOPED. THESE RESPONSES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY MOST OF THE FOLLOWING:

- ***Specific, well-elaborated reasons.*** The reasons are presented in such a way that they provide convincing support for the writer's stated choice.

- ***A consistent organizational strategy.*** Although minor lapses may occur, these responses have a clear sense of order and completeness. If an otherwise well-written response ends abruptly because the writer has run out of space, the paper is still eligible for a "4."

- ***Consistent control of the written language.*** Though the writer may not incorporate all of the appropriate mechanics or conventions of language, the response is particularly effective.

In addition, these responses may present some special feature that makes them particularly effective, such as:

●● Varied syntactic constructions, including compound and complex sentences.

●● Effective word choice, including apt or striking words, phrases, or expressions.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

I suggest that you invite Janet Jackson to visitour school. I think that you should invite Janet Jackson because she is very popular and avery good singer. There are two reasons why she is popular. One reason is becaus her brother is Michel Jackson is popular. And another reason is because she is popular herself. She is so popular that when she had a concert she had about 1 million tickets, and they got sold within two or three days. She is planning to have that concert in a big park that way there will be more room for all of the people. Janet Jackson has a new song called Escapede and it is already one of her number one songs. She is avery good dancer and she is wery pretty. So no wonder she is popular! If she would come to our school everybody would go crasy. Some kids would be asking for her autograph. Or else they would be crawling all over her. Or yelling quetions about her life as a selebrity. Sometimes I wish I could go visit her or something. And if I can't then I would like her to come visit me that way

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

we could spend the whole day together. If Janet Jackson were to come here I would like for her to teach me and my friend how to dance and how to sing and wear orr close and hair. And that is just a few reasons why I want her to come but there are lots and lots more reasons why I want her to come.

This response is well elaborated and organized, with a clear sense of beginning and ending. In the first part of the response, the writer presents many specific details that explain why Janet Jackson is so popular. After establishing and elaborating on the reasons for Jackson's popularity, the writer then discusses how Jackson might interact with students if she were invited to the school. The amount of elaboration and the overall unity and clear focus contribute to the effectiveness of the response as a whole.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

I would like you to invite President Bush. The reason why I want to invite him is because the school can learn all the rules or laws of the United States so they know when they grow up.

Another is so we can learn what being president is like. If it's hard or easy. Is it ever fun.

We can even get his autograph because we don't get to see him in person. We can keep the autograph for when he's not the president anymore.

Invite him so we can show him around our school. He might want to see all the different classrooms and all our art and science projecks.

We can have an open house the same day so the parents can meet him. Parents might want to meet him and ask him questions about what being a republican feels like. They might even ask if when he was growing up did he think about being a president or was he thinking about being something else and what was it.

He could tell us all about the navy and how hard they work. He could tell us about the army and how they started. President Bush can even tell us about how it's wrong not to follow the laws. Like if you were driving and went to fast then if you get a ticket and don't pay for it I guess that is breaking the laws.

He might bring his wife Barbara Bush so we can meet her, She likes children and reading. She can tell us how it feels to be a presidet's wife. I hope

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

GO ON

you invite Goerge Bush and his wife to come.

This response achieves a score of 4 because of its thoroughness. The writer presents many reasons in support of his or her choice of President Bush as a school visitor, each of which is specifically elaborated. This elaboration ranges from minimal (e.g., "the school can learn all the rules or laws of the United States so they know when they grow up") to moderate (e.g., the paragraph about parents and the President). The writer includes no extraneous information; each sentence contributes to the persuasiveness of the response. Although the writer moves rather abruptly from idea to idea, this lack of strong transitions is not a severe enough problem to lower the student's score.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 5

My teacher says you want to invite a famous person to come to our school. Would you like my suggestion? I would like the queen of England to visit us.

I always wanted to see a real queen in person. She could wear her crowne and let us see all the jewls in it. I bet there are dimonds and emrelds and maybe rubys in it. She could bring that wand that queens carry too. I think it has jewls in it too. Probly the same ones like are in the crowne. Her gowne will be shiny and go all the way to the ground and she will wear a red velvet robe with a fur coller. Evryone will talk about how lovly she is.

We could show her around our school. She could see our classrooms and science experments and art work. We could put on a play for her maybe about our country and hers. And my music class could sing her a song. Then she could have lunch with us. I hope we have somthing special that day.

After she does all those things she could make a speech to the whole school. She could tell us what is the difference between her school in Engeland and our school. What it is like growing up in a foregn country. And why do people from Engeland talk so funny. There are many questins I would like to ask and I bet the other kids do to. I bet the teachers have some questions and maybe even you.

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GO ON

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

If queen Elisebeth came to our School there would be reporters and TV camras Evrywhere just like when Nolen Ryan came. some of us might have our pitchers taken with the queen or be on TV with her. maybe Even she would otograph a pitcher. Wouldnt you like to be in a pitcher with a queen? Please invite queen Elisebeth to visit our school.

This response achieves a 4 because it is organized and evenly elaborated. The writer wants the Queen of England to come to the school for four reasons, each of which is specifically elaborated in a different way. The first reason is developed primarily through a description of the queen's appearance, the second through examples of what the queen might see during her visit, the third through questions the queen might answer, and the fourth through illustrations of how the school might benefit from the queen's visit. Although the word choice is not as vivid as that of some other "4" responses, the writer demonstrates consistent language control. Overall, this response is effective because of its thoroughness and clarity.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade
5

I think I would like an astronot to come visit our school. So we would know about space, earth, and the solar system. We could learn about the moon and the sun and all the planets and their moons. They could tell us what each of the planets look like close up and what color they are and what the ground look like, if it is flat or has lots of rocks or hills and if there is water.

They could also tell us what it is like to be an astronot. Is it like STAR WARS in outer space in the spaceship with all kinds of little pieces of things flying past you. Is it scarey or spooky. What does it feel like to walk on the moon. Is it hard to walk. Can you walk fast. What do you do if you get scared and want to get back in the spaceship real fast. And what does it feel like to float in the air becase theres no gravity. How do you get in those spacesuites. Do you have to have help. And what about getting out of them. What if you need to get out for something and nobody is there to help.

I also want to know what you have to learn to be an astronot. Do you have to go to colage a long time. Do you have to be a pilot. Do you have to be a sientist or an athelete. Do you have to know

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GO ON

a senater. I have lots more questions but
Ill wate until my astrenot comes here.

This response is controlled, organized, and well elaborated. It consists of three paragraphs, each of which provides a detailed, specific explanation of what students might learn from an astronaut. Although the writer closely connects these paragraphs through this general "learning" idea, each paragraph has a different focus. For example, paragraphs two and three are related in that the writer poses a number of questions about what students might ask an astronaut; however, the questions in paragraph two deal with what it is like to be an astronaut, while paragraph three focuses on what one needs to do to become an astronaut. The response as a whole provides convincing support for the writer's stated choice.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

Appendix

TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC SKILLS
OBJECTIVES AND INSTRUCTIONAL TARGETS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
Grade 5

DOMAIN: Written Communication

Objective 1: The student will respond appropriately in a written composition to the purpose/audience specified in a given topic.

- Classify differences and likenesses of objects and events
- Use ideas and information from sources other than personal experiences
- Present a set of reasons intended to persuade

Objective 2: The student will organize ideas in a written composition on a given topic.

- Arrange ideas and information
- Join related sentences into paragraphs

Objective 3: The student will demonstrate control of the English language in a written composition on a given topic.

- Use the fundamentals of grammar

Objective 4: The student will generate a written composition that develops/supports/elaborates the central idea stated in a given topic.

- Expand topics by collecting information from a variety of sources
- Delete superfluous information to address the purpose and audience more effectively

Objective 5: The student will recognize appropriate sentence construction within the context of a written passage.

- Recognize complete sentences and avoid fragments and run-ons
- Combine sentence parts and sentences to produce a variety of sentence structures including basic sentence patterns and variations

Objective 6: The student will recognize appropriate English usage within the context of a written passage.

- Use the correct subject, object, and possessive forms of pronouns
- Use correct subject-verb agreement with personal pronouns and compound subjects
- Recognize correct verb tense and correct form of tense of irregular verbs
- Use the correct forms of adjectives and adverbs

Objective 7: The student will recognize appropriate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation within the context of a written passage.

- Use the fundamentals of spelling
- Use appropriate capitalization
- Use the fundamentals of punctuation

EXPLANATION OF PURPOSE/MODE AT GRADE 5

Writing is a process for communication. However, not all forms of written communication are the same, nor should all written communication occur in the same way. Individuals write to accomplish a purpose. At the Grade 5 level, three purposes have been identified as appropriate for measurement in this assessment:

- **Persuasive - The writer presents reasons in support of a point of view with the intention of influencing a particular audience.**
- **Informative - The writer selects facts so that information can be conveyed.**
- **Expressive - The writer expresses thoughts or feelings about an event or object.**

Generally, these purposes do not occur in isolation. For example, a persuasive task may rely on expressive discourse in the presentation of information to influence a particular audience. However, one purpose is generally primary, while others are subordinate to the main purpose. In this assessment, written composition items are designed to focus, as much as possible, on a single purpose that is stated or implied in the prompt.

In conjunction with the idea of writing for a particular purpose is the concept of writing for a specific audience. As one varies his or her writing to fit a particular purpose, one varies his or her writing to address a specific audience.

In this assessment, the audience is specified in the prompt or is assumed to be the reader. The student is expected to respond to the appropriate audience in his or her composition.

To communicate ideas in a clear and effective manner, one must employ a method or mode of organization appropriate for its intended purpose. At the Grade 5 level, three modes of organization have been identified as appropriate for measurement in this assessment:

- **Narrative - The writer sequences events in a particular order.**
- **Descriptive - The writer uses language to portray features and/or qualities of an idea or object.**
- **Classificatory - The writer groups elements on the basis of their characteristics.**

While each of these modes can be easily defined, they do not generally occur in isolation in written discourse. For example, a narrative may include description or a description may classify. For purposes of this assessment, an attempt is made to cue students to a dominant mode so that they will use that method of organization in their responses.

For this assessment the writing task calls for a particular combination of purpose and mode. The application of a scoring guide that is specific to a particular purpose/mode ensures consistency and reliability in scoring voluminous student responses. One should recognize, however, that in everyday writing, purposes and modes sometimes overlap.

ELIGIBLE TYPES OF WRITING AT GRADE 5

A: Write a composition to describe an object, person, place, situation, or picture.

Description of Writing Prompt

1. The prompt will elicit a composition that has an informative purpose and is written in the descriptive mode.
2. The prompt will ask the student to describe an object, person, place, situation, or picture. The specified audience will be an appropriate adult or peer audience, such as a classmate, a teacher, or the principal. Verbal cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the prompt.
3. If a pictorial stimulus is given, it will consist of either a scene or a single object familiar to all beginning fifth grade students. The picture will be either fanciful or realistic and will be relatively simple. Visual cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the picture.
4. If the item to be described is not pictured, it will be familiar to beginning fifth grade students so that they can write about it.
5. The prompt will contain vocabulary appropriate for beginning fifth grade students.
6. The prompt will appeal to the interests and experiences of beginning fifth grade students.

Description of Successful Responses

The composition will have an informative purpose and will be written in a descriptive mode and in a manner appropriate to the specified audience. The level of expectation for student performance will be appropriate for beginning fifth grade students.

1. The description will be specific and elaborated. The writer should describe a lengthy set of features, which may be elaborated through the use of figurative language and/or rich detail.
2. The description will paint a vivid picture of the object or scene in the mind of the reader by using picturesque words and/or sophisticated sentence structure.
3. The response will be consistent in its organizational strategy. Usually the writer will select one feature and describe it fully before moving on to another feature. If appropriate, the writer will include the locations of features described and delineate the relationship of one feature to another.
4. The response will remain on topic from beginning to end and will not digress into an expressive/narrative piece. The writer may frame the description with narration or interject expressive elements, but these enhance the description rather than detract from it.

B: Write a composition to tell how to do something.

Description of Writing Prompt

1. The prompt will elicit a composition that has an informative purpose and is written in the narrative mode.
2. The prompt will ask the student to tell how to do something. The specified audience will be an appropriate adult or peer audience, such as a classmate, a teacher, or the principal. Verbal cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the prompt.
3. The prompt will include a pictorial stimulus, or it will specify a process that is to be explained.
4. If a pictorial stimulus is given, it will consist of a scene, a single object, or a series of pictures familiar to all beginning fifth grade students. The stimulus will be relatively simple in nature; no extraneous details will be included. Visual cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the picture.
5. If a process is to be explained, the process will be familiar to beginning fifth grade students so that they will be able to write about it.
6. The prompt will contain vocabulary appropriate for beginning fifth grade students.
7. The prompt will appeal to the interests and experiences of beginning fifth grade students.

Description of Successful Responses

The composition will have an informative purpose and will be written in the narrative mode and in a manner appropriate to the specified audience. The level of expectation for student performance will be appropriate for beginning fifth grade students.

1. The composition will delineate the steps needed to complete the specified task and will order these steps sequentially.
2. Each step presented will be unambiguous, specific, and elaborated so that the step could be replicated by another individual.
3. The response will be consistent in its organizational strategy. A logical sequence of steps will be presented. The writer will describe each step fully before moving on to another step.

C: Write a narrative on a specified topic.

Description of Writing Prompt

1. The prompt will elicit a composition that has an expressive purpose and is written in the narrative mode.
2. The prompt will ask the student to write a story. The stated or implied audience will be an appropriate adult or peer audience, such as a classmate, a teacher, or the principal. Verbal cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the prompt.
3. The prompt will include a picture, or it will specify a story scenario.
4. If a pictorial stimulus is given, it will consist of a scene or a single object, and it will be fanciful or realistic. The stimulus will be relatively simple in nature; no extraneous details will be included. Visual cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the picture.
5. If a story scenario is presented, it will be familiar to beginning fifth grade students so that they will be able to write about it.
6. The prompt will contain vocabulary appropriate for beginning fifth grade students.
7. The prompt will appeal to the interests and experiences of beginning fifth grade students.

Description of Successful Responses

The composition will have an expressive purpose and will be written in the narrative mode and in a manner appropriate to the specified audience. The level of expectation for student performance will be appropriate for beginning fifth grade students.

1. The story will follow the narrative progression from beginning to end. The writer will not make abrupt, confusing shifts in time or location. When shifts in time or location occur, the writer will handle these in a clear, effective manner.
2. The narrative will have a clear sense of beginning and ending. The writer will not end the composition abruptly but will bring closure to it by resolving the action.
3. The response will include rich details and a varied choice of words. Description will be vivid and extensive and will help the reader to visualize the events of the story. The details will embellish the unfolding events.

D: Write a composition in which ideas/objects/people/places are classified according to specified criteria and described.

Description of Writing Prompt

1. The prompt will elicit a composition that has an informative purpose and is written in a classificatory mode.
2. The prompt will ask the student to classify ideas/objects/people/places. The specified audience will be an appropriate adult or peer audience, such as a classmate, a teacher, or the principal. Verbal cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the prompt.
3. The prompt will include a pictorial stimulus, or it will simply specify the ideas/objects/people/places to be discussed.
4. If a pictorial stimulus is given, it will consist of a series of pictures that are familiar to beginning fifth grade students and are relatively simple in nature; no extraneous details will be included. Visual cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the picture.
5. If ideas/objects/people/places are described in the prompt stimulus, they will be familiar to beginning fifth grade students so that they can write about them.
6. The prompt will contain vocabulary appropriate for beginning fifth grade students.
7. The prompt will appeal to the interests and experiences of beginning fifth grade students.

Description of Successful Responses

The composition will have an informative purpose and will be written in the classificatory mode and in a manner appropriate to the specified audience. The level of expectation for student performance will be appropriate for beginning fifth grade students.

1. In the composition, the specified ideas/objects/people/places will be classified in a logical way in response to the specified audience.
2. Information presented about the specified ideas/objects/people/places will be specific and elaborated.
3. The response will be consistent in its organizational strategy. Relationships between the ideas delineated will be clear.
4. The response will remain on topic from beginning to end. When personal anecdotes or other rhetorical devices are used, they will enhance the response rather than detract from it.

E: Write a composition in which a choice is made and reasons that would support the choice and convince a specified audience are presented.

Description of Writing Prompt

1. The prompt will elicit a composition that has a persuasive purpose and is written in a descriptive mode.
2. The prompt will ask the student to make a choice and present convincing reasons for the choice to a specified audience. The specified audience will be an appropriate adult or peer audience, such as a classmate, a teacher, or the principal. Verbal cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the prompt.
3. The prompt will include a pictorial stimulus, or it will simply specify options among which a choice will be made.
4. If a pictorial stimulus is given, it will consist of either a scene or a single object familiar to all beginning fifth grade students. The picture will be relatively simple; no extraneous details will be included. Visual cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the picture.
5. If the options among which a choice will be made are described in the prompt stimulus, the options will be familiar to all beginning fifth grade students so that they can write about them.
6. The prompt will contain vocabulary appropriate for beginning fifth grade students.
7. The prompt will appeal to the interests and experiences of beginning fifth grade students.

Description of Successful Responses

The composition will have a persuasive purpose and will be written in the descriptive mode and in a manner appropriate to the specified audience. The level of expectation for student performance will be appropriate for beginning fifth grade students. In the composition, the student will make a choice and will provide reasons for the choice that are presented in a logical, unified way and are convincing to a specified audience.

1. The response will contain sufficient elaboration of reasons to make them understood clearly and to be convincing in support of the writer's stated position.
2. The response will contain a clear sense of order and completeness as evidenced by effective use of transitional, introductory, and concluding elements.
3. The response will contain highly effective word choice, such as striking words, phrases, or expressions of thought.
4. The response will be characterized by an overall fluency in the expression of ideas.

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, 1973 EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; AND VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED IN 1974.

It is the policy of the Texas Education Agency to comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency makes positive efforts to employ and advance in employment all protected groups.

Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1491

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